



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Human Resource Management: The International Context

Unit code: H1XT 35

Superclass: AD

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Unit purpose

This Unit examines the way in which international organisations plan, organise, and control their human resources in different national contexts. Such organisations have to be aware that different cultures require different approaches in order to achieve effective performance. This Unit will highlight different working practices, with special reference to the effective management of people. It will provide the opportunity to examine the various roles of management from a strategic to an operating level in organisations located in different international contexts.

On completion of the Unit the candidate should be able to:

- 1 Assess the impact of national culture on an organisation.
- 2 Evaluate comparative human resource management: theory, practice and context.
- 3 Evaluate international human resource management: theory, practice and context.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

Access to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre. However, candidates would normally be expected to have competence in communication skills at SCQF level 6 or similar qualifications or experience. It is recommended that candidates should be able to provide evidence of prior study or experience in the field of human resource management (HRM).

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 8: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 8*)

**SCQF credit points are used to allocate credit to qualifications in the Scottish Credit and Qualifications Framework (SCQF). Each qualification in the Framework is allocated a number of SCQF credit points at an SCQF level. There are 12 SCQF levels, ranging from Access 1 to Doctorates.*

General information (cont)

Core Skills

Opportunities to develop aspects of Core Skills are highlighted in the Support Notes of this Unit specification.

There is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skill components in this Unit.

Context for delivery

If this Unit is delivered as part of a Group Award, it is recommended that it should be taught and assessed within the subject area of the Group Award to which it contributes.

The assessment exemplar for this Unit provides assessment and marking guidelines that exemplify the national standard for achievement. It is a valid, reliable and practicable instrument of assessment. Centres wishing to develop their own assessments should refer to the assessment exemplar to ensure a comparable standard. Assessment exemplars are available on SQA's secure website.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards

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The sections of the Unit stating the Outcomes, Knowledge and/or Skills, and Evidence Requirements are mandatory.

Where evidence for Outcomes is assessed on a sample basis, the whole of the content listed in the Knowledge and/or Skills section must be taught and available for assessment. Candidates should not know in advance the items on which they will be assessed and different items should be sampled on each assessment occasion.

Outcome 1

Assess the impact of cross cultural differences on the organisation.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The meaning of culture
- ◆ Ways in which national cultures differ
- ◆ Examples of major cultural frameworks
- ◆ Impact of culture on leadership styles
- ◆ Complexities of International Resource Management (IHRM)
- ◆ Differences between international and domestic HRM practice

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can assess the way in which working practices are influenced by national culture. Candidates must include:

- ◆ a definition of what is meant by national culture
- ◆ examples of three different national cultures and the differences between them in terms of their effect on an organisation
- ◆ analysis of cross cultural differences
- ◆ examples of two multinational organisations showing how cross cultural differences have influenced leadership styles.
- ◆ an outline of the differences between international and domestic HRM practices

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Human Resource Management: The International Context

Outcome 2

Evaluate comparative human resource management: theory, practice and context.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Comparative HRM and its component parts
- ◆ Role of HRM departments in an international context
- ◆ Ways in which organisations manage their HRM activities
- ◆ Involvement of line managers in HRM

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can:

- ◆ evaluate the ways in which different cultures influence the role of HRM within different countries
- ◆ analyse how HR departments are organised and how line managers are involved in a range of HRM activities across two national cultures used in Outcome 1
- ◆ outline the complexities of managing people in an international environment as opposed to a domestic environment

Outcome 3

Evaluate international human resource management: theory, practice and context.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ International organisational structures
- ◆ Strategic human resource management
- ◆ Theoretical frameworks and concepts underpinning international HRM
- ◆ International strategy and working practices
- ◆ International strategy and managing diversity
- ◆ MNEs (Multinational Enterprises) and HRM activities

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Human Resource Management: The International Context

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their knowledge and/or skills by showing that they can evaluate international HRM by:

- ◆ applying the theory of managing in a multinational organisation across different cultures across the two national cultures used in Outcome 1
- ◆ consideration of the international structures available to managers and the contribution of both the theory and practice of International HRM, including:
 - an understanding of different working practices
 - how to manage international diversity

Candidates should also show that they can evaluate the ways in which the managers of MNEs operate to meet both the demands of the organisation as well as all stakeholders within the international environment.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Human Resource Management: The International Context

This part of the Unit specification is offered as guidance. The support notes are not mandatory.

While the exact time allocated to this Unit is at the discretion of the centre, the notional design length is 40 hours.

Guidance on the content and context for this Unit

The purpose of this Unit is to demonstrate the ways in which cross cultural differences influence organisational characteristics and HRM practices.

It is designed to allow candidates to acquire an understanding of both of the following:

- ◆ the HRM working practices of domestic organisations in countries with different cultures
- ◆ how the HR functions of MNEs operate within the global context

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

At the end of the Unit candidates should be able to recognise international business and HRM issues and appropriate responses to them. They should know the cross cultural differences which pertain and be aware of political and economic issues which impact on the performance on Multinational Enterprises (MNEs)

For this essential underpinning knowledge to remain current and valid centres need to review and update where appropriate the content of this Unit on an annual basis. Centres should be aware of changing international relationships and practices which affect the MNEs and in particular their Human Resource Management functions.

Outcome 1

The purpose of this Outcome is to provide candidates with an understanding of different national cultures, and how these may affect the management of both local business organisations and the management of MNEs.

This will give the centre the opportunity to ensure that candidates have the required understanding to progress further with this Unit.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Human Resource Management: The International Context

Outcomes 2 and 3

The purpose of these two Outcomes is to assess the candidate's ability to deal with the theoretical concepts and apply this knowledge in a practical setting either by case study or an investigation. This will allow the candidate to acquire understanding of the issues listed below:

- ◆ Universal HRM
- ◆ Contextual HRM
- ◆ Convergence approach to HRM
- ◆ Divergence approach to HRM
- ◆ Similarities and differences in the role of HRM departments in different countries
- ◆ Approaches which organisations in different countries adopt to manage their HRM activities in such areas as:
 - human resource planning
 - recruitment and selection
 - reward systems
 - learning and development
 - equality and diversity
- ◆ Examine the ways in which MNEs organise their HRM activities in a global context across different countries, in such areas as:
 - human resource planning
 - recruitment and selection
 - reward systems
 - learning and development
 - equality and diversity

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

This Unit may be assessed in a variety of ways as outlined in Assessment Guidelines below.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

Use of open-book questions or a report to allow candidates to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the principles and concepts — covering all evidence requirements. This can be written and/or oral evidence.

Outcomes 2 and 3

Outcomes 2 and 3: Integrated approach using a case study or an investigation (including an internet investigation) of an MNE to evaluate the complex issues of both comparative and international HRM theories, practice and contexts, ie 'good HRM practices'. This evaluation could be written up in a report or delivered orally.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Human Resource Management: The International Context

Online and Distance Learning

The Unit could be delivered by distance learning; however, it would require planning by the centre to ensure the efficiency and authenticity of candidate evidence.

For open or flexible learning, additional resources and materials will be required for candidate support, assessment and quality assurance. For further information and advice please refer to the SQA's website: www.sqa.org.uk

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

There are opportunities to gather evidence towards Core Skills in this Unit, although there is no automatic certification of Core Skills or Core Skills components.

Communication: Reading, Written and Oral at SCQF level 6

This Unit can provide the opportunity of responding to questions and analysis and evaluation of a case study. This provides underpinning knowledge by reading and interpreting complex information. For all Outcomes, where assessments are in written format, this would develop written communications for complex international situations. Oral communication could also be developed in all Outcomes through group discussions which will analyse and evaluate related information on both comparative and international HRM and Multinational Enterprises (MNEs).

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) at SCQF level 6

IT skills could be developed in Outcomes 2 and 3 through internet research of MNEs to evaluate complex comparative and international HRM theories, practices and contexts,

Working with Others at SCQF level 6:

This Core Skill could be developed where candidates are employed. There could be an analytical and evaluative approach to working with a range of others in an organisation on international HRM issues, which could then be reflected in whole class group work activities.

Problem Solving at SCQF level 6

This Unit offers many opportunities for candidates to tackle issues and problems in complex international HRM and MNEs including critical thinking, planning/organisation and reviewing/evaluating. They have to identify complex factors, assess their relevance, analyse ways to solving problems and their justify conclusions.

Disabled candidates and/or those with additional support needs

The additional support needs of individual candidates should be taken into account when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment instruments, or considering whether any reasonable adjustments may be required. Further advice can be found on our website www.sqa.org.uk/assessmentarrangements

History of changes to Unit

Version	Description of change	Date

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General information for candidates

Unit title: Human Resource Management: The International Context

This Unit is designed to give you the opportunity to take a look at the way in which the management teams of large organisations are able to operate around the world in countries whose values and beliefs are different from those which we experience in the UK. At the same time you will have the opportunity to examine how organisations in different countries manage their human resources.

The Unit will examine the importance of Human Resource Management in helping organisations to operate in a competitive international environment. You will be introduced to relevant major theories that will enhance your understanding of this interesting area of study.

You will also have the opportunity to put this knowledge into practice by carrying out an investigation into the practices of a multinational enterprise (MNE). You will consider working practices across different national cultures. It is hoped that you will be able to investigate an organisation and country of your choice; but this is subject to the approval of the centre where you will be taking your studies.

This Unit may be assessed in a variety of ways such as responding to specific questions, producing a report; the use of case study or an internet investigation followed by the production of an evaluation report. Your tutor will confirm the exact assessment arrangements with you.

By successfully completing this Unit you should be able to:

- ◆ assess the impact of cross cultural differences on the organisation
- ◆ evaluate comparative human resource management: theory, practice and context
- ◆ evaluate international human resource management: theory, practice and context