



Higher National Unit specification: general information

Unit title: Human Resource Management: Introduction

Unit code: H1KP 34

Superclass: AJ

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Version: 01

Unit purpose

This introductory Unit is intended for candidates who are preparing to study Human Resource Management, or are considering a career in this discipline. It is also for those candidates who may wish to gain a holistic overview of how Human Resource Management can add value to an organisation. It is designed to develop knowledge of the role of Human Resource Management as a key function within organisations and to develop understanding of the background to the development of the discipline of Human Resource Management. It introduces candidates to the activities that make up Human Resource Management and how these activities contribute to the success of an organisation.

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

- 1 Explain the historical development and function of Human Resource Management.
- 2 Explain the main activities of Human Resource Management.
- 3 Analyse the contribution of Human Resource Management to organisational success.

Recommended prior knowledge and skills

It is recommended that candidates undertaking this Unit possess good communication skills at a level equivalent to SCQF level 5.

Credit points and level

1 Higher National Unit credit at SCQF level 7: (8 SCQF credit points at SCQF level 7*)

**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.

Please refer to *Knowledge and/or Skills for the Unit* and *Evidence Requirements for the Unit* after the Outcomes.

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

Explain the historical development and function of Human Resource Management.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ The evolution of Human Resource Management in organisations.
- ◆ Differences between the functions of Personnel Management and Human Resource Management.

Evidence Requirements

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

- ◆ describe the main factors that have impacted on the evolution of Human Resource Management
- ◆ explain the key functions of Personnel Management versus Human Resource Management

Outcome 2

Explain the main activities of Human Resource Management.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Range of Human Resource Management activities.
- ◆ Purpose of Human Resource Management activities.
- ◆ Management Information Systems.

Evidence Requirements

Please refer to Outcome 3. The Evidence Requirements for Outcome 2 have been combined with Outcome 3.

Higher National Unit specification: statement of standards (cont)

Unit title: Human Resource Management: Introduction

Outcome 3

Analyse the contribution of Human Resource Management to organisational success.

Knowledge and/or Skills

- ◆ Different levels of contribution of Human Resource Management.
- ◆ The contribution of Human Resource Management activities to organisational success.
- ◆ The psychological contract.

Evidence Requirements

Candidates will need to provide evidence to demonstrate their Knowledge and/or Skills showing that they can give an accurate account of the development of human resources by producing a report that:

- ◆ describes four of the activities that make up Human Resource Management
- ◆ explains the purpose of four Human Resource Management activities
- ◆ explains the use of Management Information Systems (MIS) in Human Resource Management
- ◆ explains the different levels of contribution of Human Resource Management within organisations
- ◆ analyses the contribution of Human Resource Management activities to organisational success
- ◆ analyses how Human Resource Management activities impact on the behaviour of employees

The candidate evidence presented within their report requires a satisfactory response to all of the above Evidence Requirements.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes

Unit title: Human Resource Management: Introduction

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

This Unit is designed to give candidates a broad introduction to the human resource function. The subject matter should be taught at a generic level. It is important that candidates understand how the function has developed, the range of activities carried out and how these activities contribute to organisational or business success. It sets human resource activities in the context of business as a whole. Depending on the qualification candidates are working towards centres may choose to contextualise this Unit to a specific sector.

Outcome 1

This Outcome is intended to give candidates a brief overview of the history of Human Resource Management. Outcome 1 should set the context for the two Outcomes that follow it. In addition to the guidance given here, centres will find that the website for the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development is useful for a range of information. Examples include: the history of personnel and the use of technology for managing Human Resource Management information.

It is suggested that centres choose a relevant starting point for the development of Human Resource Management, For example some may wish to start at the Industrial Revolution in Western Europe, and others may choose the growth of welfare at work or take a post 1945 welfare state view. Centres should consider the role different groups and individuals have played in shaping values relating to people management. Examples are religious groups such as Quakers, philanthropic employers and trade unions. However, these aspects should be presented as an overview to set the context, and no in-depth assessment should be expected.

The description of the changes to employment patterns and the economic environment should include the rise of large multidivisional organisations, downsizing, permanent/ temporary, full time/part time working, shifts from manufacturing to service sectors, off shoring and globalisation as well as shifts in public, private and third sector employment.

Human Resource Management continues to make increasing use of technology. Centres should briefly mention how technology is used for managing information and delivering Human Resource Management activities. When discussing the breadth of influence of technological change on the way in which human resource activities are carried out centres can usefully include the computerisation of employee records, the use of on line recruitment practices, advice services and training methods.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Human Resource Management: Introduction

When dealing with the legal background the objective is to provide a general introduction to raise awareness of the changes in the legal dimension to employment. It is suggested that the following should be briefly mentioned: the legal background to personnel practice such as civil law in particular contracts of employment, employment protection rights and statutory legislation covering the broad area of health and safety, equality and trade union law. The emphasis should be on the need to seek advice in matters relating to employment law.

Outcome 2

When dealing with the range of Human Resource Management activities centres should focus primarily on major activities such as human resource planning, recruitment, selection and induction, employee relations, pay and reward, job design and evaluation, training and development. The way in which Management Information Systems supports Human Resource Management's long range plans based upon performance including people management, recruitment and training requirements. Other activities such as performance management and appraisal, employee welfare and ensuring fair employment practice can be discussed as considered appropriate.

The list of Human Resource Management activities should be kept under review and opportunities taken to include new activities as they become topical.

Outcome 3

When introducing the way in which Human Resource Management functions operate in organisations centres should briefly mention: centralisation, de-centralisation and outsourcing, generalist and specialist Human Resource Management roles and the use of external Human Resource Management consultants for specific tasks such as delivering training courses. A contemporary example being Dave Ulrich's HR Business Partner model where one of the main drivers of change is cost efficiency, with a Shared Service Centre providing low-cost HR administration.

Public, private and voluntary sector organisations may well have different views and practices relating to their use of Human Resource Management professionals. As a result Human Resource Management functions can operate at different levels from clerical and administrative to strategic.

When considering the variations in the Human Resource Management activities centres should refer to how these can arise. For example, they can occur as a result of contextual variables such as the values and beliefs of top management, the organisation's business strategy and core activities, the organisation's structure, the extent to which human resource matters are dealt with by line managers, the credibility and professionalism of the Human Resource Management function and the need the organisation has for professional advice. In the case of the latter, an organisation that is expanding rapidly will require more professional Human Resource Management advice and support as it has to recruit and train large numbers of new employees.

The psychological contract should be introduced to enable students to be aware of the fact that different Human Resource Management practices impact differently on individuals and as a result can have positive or negative effects on job performance. Centres will find useful information relating to it on factsheets at the CIPD website.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Human Resource Management: Introduction

Guidance on the delivery of this Unit

This Unit provides candidates with a foundation for understanding Human Resource Management. It enables them to move more easily to a more detailed study of human resource activities. As such it is suited to delivery at the beginning of the HNC Human Resource Management. It introduces candidates to concepts that will be developed further in other Units in the HNC and HND in Human Resource Management. As a general introduction to Human Resources, it is suitable for inclusion in related qualifications where an appreciation of the purpose of these activities is helpful. Centres may choose to contextualise the Unit as appropriate. For example, when this Unit is part of a Group Award that is sector specific centres can contextualise the Unit to that sector, for example, Sports Management.

The three Outcomes in this Unit are not of equal weighting. Outcome 1 is of less weight than Outcomes 2 and 3. Centres should take this into consideration when delivering and assessing each of the Outcomes.

Guidance on the assessment of this Unit

When assessing the Unit, the focus for the assessment should be to allow candidates to express a general understanding of human resources rather than in depth knowledge of specific Evidence Requirements.

The opportunity for integrated assessment with the HN Unit entitled 'Recruitment, Selection and Induction' exists through preparing for and conducting a selection interview.

Assessment Guidelines

Outcome 1

Outcome 1 could be assessed through the use of short response questions designed to cover all of the evidence requirements for this Outcome. The assessment should be conducted under open-book conditions.

Outcomes 2 and 3

Outcomes 2 and 3 lend themselves to holistic assessment through the use of a combined assessment. A case study and report (of around 1,500 words or equivalent) being the optimum to allow candidates to learn through assessment.

It is possible to assess Outcomes 2 and 3 by generating evidence towards the end of the Unit. A given set of questions will assist candidates in structuring their response which will allow them to base their analysis on a case study in reference to a particular situation.

Higher National Unit specification: support notes (cont)

Unit title: Human Resource Management: Introduction

Online and Distance Learning

There are considerable opportunities for Online and Distance Learning and Assessment of this Unit.

It is possible to co-ordinate a learning and teaching/assessment programme through a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) which would allow geographically dispersed candidates to initiate, develop and maintain contact with each other. Centres which wish to use Information and Communication Technology (ICT) must ensure that the national standard is applied to all candidate evidence and that conditions of assessment as specified in the Evidence Requirements are met, regardless of the mode of gathering evidence. Further advice is available in *SQA Guidelines on Online Assessment for Further Education (AA1641, March 2003)* or latest issue if this version is superseded.

Opportunities for developing Core Skills

All Outcomes in this Unit afford candidates the opportunity of developing Core Skills at SCQF level 6 as noted below.

Communication: Reading, Written and Oral

Outcomes 2 and 3 provide research for an in-depth report. This provides underpinning knowledge by reading complex information on theory and practical applications of HRM in organisational success. The holistic written report covering the application of HRM and its contribution to organisational success develops written communications. Oral communication could be developed by group discussions through the analysis and evaluation of information related to each Outcome and through verbal exploration of complex issues.

Problem Solving: Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is developed by candidates through study of the behavioural theories and practical approaches to problem solving in organisations.

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: Introduction

This Unit is designed to give you a general understanding of the development of Human Resource Management. It will introduce you to the range of activities that make up the Human Resource Management function and how they can operate in organisations. You will learn the purpose of these activities and how they can contribute to organisational success.

You may be someone considering human resources as a career. You may already have Human Resource Management or administration as part of your role at work. If so this Unit is useful for you to give you a broad overview of the function. If you are considering general management as a career or if you are already in a management role, this Unit will give you a greater understanding of the purpose of Human Resource Management activities. It will enable you to make better use of the services offered by human resource professionals and help you improve your management of people.