

NextGen HN: unit specification

Human Resource Management: Employee Relationship Management (SCQF level 8)

Unit code: JN13 48

SCQF level: 8 (8 SCQF credit points)

Valid from: August 2026

This unit specification provides detailed information about the unit to ensure consistent and transparent assessment year on year. It is for lecturers and assessors, and contains all the mandatory information you need to deliver and assess the unit.

Published: June 2026 (version 1.0)

Copyright © Qualifications Scotland 2026

Contents

Unit purpose	1
Unit outcomes	2
Knowledge and skills.....	4
Meta-skills.....	6
Literacies	9
Learning for Sustainability	10
Delivery of unit	11
Additional guidance.....	12
Equality and inclusion	15
Information for learners.....	16
Administrative information.....	20

Unit purpose

This unit develops learners' knowledge and understanding of employee relationship management. Learners explain the concept and process, and develop the knowledge and skills to apply that process in an organisation.

It is suitable for learners working in, or interested in, human resource management in all types and sizes of organisations, including public and private, and those operating in different markets and environments, for example online.

Entry to the unit is at your centre's discretion. Before they start the unit, we recommend learners have good communication and research skills. It would also be beneficial if they have previous workplace experience, as the concepts and processes included in this unit cover both the complexity and ambiguity of the current working environment.

You can deliver this unit as part of a Higher National Certificate (HNC) or Higher National Diploma (HND). Learners can study this unit as a stand-alone unit when it is contextualised to a specific discipline.

Unit outcomes

Learners who complete this unit can:

1. define employee relationship management and explain the main related concepts
2. explain the process of employee relationship management
3. apply employee relationship management strategies in a business context

Evidence requirements

Learners need to use the evidence they produce for outcomes 1 and 2 to support their recommendations in outcome 3. They can complete the assessment in stages, but their evidence must be progressive, rather than discrete.

For outcomes 1 and 2, learners refer to a real-life situation or case study.

For outcome 3, you must give learners a business context to work with.

Outcome 1

Referring to a real-life situation or case study, learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- produce a definition of the concept of employee relationship management
- provide a rationale for investing in employee relationship management
- define and explain 'the psychological contract'
- define and explain 'talent management'
- apply a relevant theoretical model

Outcome 2

Referring to a real-life situation or case study, learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- explain the employee life cycle

- describe how to manage communication and maintain positive relationships with employees

Outcome 3

For a given business context, learners must produce evidence to show they can:

- identify and explain the internal and external factors that influence employee relationship management
- present the business case for positive employee relationship management

Knowledge and skills

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 1 Learners should understand: • a range of current definitions of employee relationship management • business, moral and ethical reasons for employee relationship management • the psychological contract and its main characteristics • talent management and its main characteristics • the importance of valuing both individuality and diversity in employee relationship management • the range of flexible working options and relevant work-life balance legislation • relevant theoretical models	Outcome 1 Learners can: • apply a relevant theoretical model to a real-life situation or case study
Outcome 2 Learners should understand: • the critical stages of the employee life cycle • how to maintain positive relationships with employees • how to encourage and facilitate a two-way communication process • how to manage careers and the importance of achieving mutuality • how to take a collaborative approach to employee relationship management and the importance of all stakeholders working in partnership	Outcome 2 Learners can: • explain the employee life cycle • describe how to manage communication and maintain positive relationships with employees

Knowledge	Skills
Outcome 3 Learners should understand: • the PESTLE model • internal and external factors that have an effect on employee relationship management	Outcome 3 Learners can: • present a business case for positive employee relationship management

Meta-skills

You must give learners opportunities to develop their meta-skills throughout this unit. We have suggested how to incorporate the most relevant ones into the unit content, but you may find other opportunities.

Self-management

This includes focusing, integrity, adapting and initiative. The most relevant are:

- focusing:
 - analysing and interpreting data and factual information
 - critically evaluating information from a variety of sources, for example case studies, reports and surveys
 - maintaining accuracy and focus while using and interpreting data
- integrity:
 - understanding business, moral and ethical reasons for employee relationship management
 - understanding ethics, inclusion and diversity in employment-related practices
 - understanding how core values underpin effective employee relationships
- adapting:
 - understanding theoretical models and applying these to real-life situations or case studies
- initiative:
 - carrying out independent research using credible, relevant and up-to-date information
 - identifying gaps in knowledge or understanding and carrying out self-directed learning

Social intelligence

This includes communicating, feeling, collaborating and leading. The most relevant are:

- communicating:
 - receiving and conveying a wide range of information
 - conveying information to meet audience needs by adapting communication style, tone and level of detail
 - researching complex issues and filtering the relevant information
 - finding and processing complex information from multiple sources and then summarising and presenting this information
- feeling:
 - looking at employee relationship management from a wide variety of perspectives
 - considering different stakeholders and their workplace relationships
 - using emotional intelligence
- collaborating:
 - working effectively with others to co-create ideas, solve problems and share responsibilities
 - having discussions and sharing ideas
- leading:
 - taking ownership of their learning by planning effectively and completing all assessments
 - setting goals and managing deadlines
 - promoting respect for diverse opinions

Innovation

This includes curiosity, creativity, sense-making and critical thinking. The most relevant are:

- curiosity:
 - investigating and analysing new and unfamiliar information and theories
 - exploring theories in detail
 - asking questions and exploring emerging HR trends while considering diverse viewpoints, cultures and business contexts
- creativity:
 - exploring ideas and producing solutions
 - considering innovative solutions to workplace concerns
- sense-making:
 - connecting employee relationship management theories to real-life situations or case studies
 - interpreting theoretical models, data and information to make informed decisions
- critical thinking:
 - analysing situations and issues around key aspects of employee relationship management
 - evaluating, identifying and questioning when necessary

Literacies

This unit provides opportunities to develop the following literacies.

Numeracy

Learners develop numeracy skills by:

- working with data and statistics related to employee relationships
- interpreting numerical information, for example, by analysing staff turnover rates, absenteeism level or other performance indicators
- applying numerical reasoning to decisions in employee relationship management
- using data to explore how numerical evidence informs practical decisions

Communication

Learners develop communication skills by:

- receiving and conveying a wide range of information
- researching complex issues and filtering the relevant information
- finding, selecting, filtering and synthesising relevant sources of information
- presenting information clearly in a professional and academic context, for example reports, essays and business cases
- engaging in discussion and collaborative tasks, for example, in group work

Digital

Learners develop digital skills by:

- using digital skills to carry out research and gather resources
- using different software to complete work, such as Word and PowerPoint
- communicating and collaborating online, for example by using applications such as MS Teams or virtual learning environments to share resources, manage tasks and/or submit work

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you should encourage learners to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

This includes:

- a general understanding of social, economic and environmental sustainability
- a general understanding of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)
- a deeper understanding of subject-specific sustainability
- the confidence to apply the skills, knowledge, understanding and values they develop in the next stage of their life

Delivery of unit

You can deliver this unit:

- as part of a course where employee relationship management is relevant
- as a stand-alone unit when it is contextualised in other subject areas

The notional time for delivery and assessment is 40 hours. The amount of time you allocate to each outcome is at your discretion.

Additional guidance

The guidance in this section is not mandatory.

Content and context for this unit

The unit is designed to:

- develop learners' understanding of the often complex, uncertain and ambiguous nature of the workplace
- give learners confidence to work in this environment by developing their skills to analyse real situations, rather than rely on textbook solutions

Outcomes 1 and 2 develop learners' knowledge of theory and current practice. In outcome 3, within the context of a real situation, they evaluate and apply this knowledge, justifying their decisions.

Throughout the unit, you should emphasise the importance of developing business decision-making skills. Effective business decisions are those that are the best fit for the organisation and are informed by current theory and practice.

To perform well in this unit, learners need to combine sound theoretical knowledge with effective contextual analysis to produce a well-justified business case.

Outcome 1 content

You should:

- introduce the origins of employee relationship management in customer relationship management, and briefly explore its links with that philosophy
- cover the related concept of the psychological contract. You could:
 - focus on its evolving nature and current emphasis on 'employability security'
 - introduce David Guest's model of the psychological contract

- cover current legislation relating to:
 - employment contracts
 - equal opportunities and managing diversity
 - flexible working

Outcome 2 content

You should:

- cover the four key stages of the employee lifecycle:
 - recruitment
 - induction
 - career building
 - career maintenance
- explore positive employee relationship management tools, including:
 - good communication
 - relevant learning and development activity
 - supportive performance-management processes
 - effective reward — both financial and non-financial
- introduce the concept of achieving mutuality in the management of careers by aligning organisational and individual needs, and explore the concept of 'partnership'. (Harrison's *Learning & Development* (2009. fifth edition) is a useful source for both topics)

Outcome 3 content

You should:

- introduce the PESTLE (political, economic, social, technological, legal, and environmental) strategic framework and explain that it is used to identify and analyse external factors that influence an organisation or business

- cover the external PESTLE factors and their implications for employee relationship management
- cover internal employee relationship management factors such as:
 - structure
 - culture
 - business aims and objectives
 - management style
 - HR practices and processes

Learners should be able to differentiate between the potential implications of these factors and their actual impact on a given situation.

Approaches to delivery

You should encourage learners to:

- do a considerable amount of personal reading and research
- widen their reading and research beyond recommended management texts to current business publications, online discussions and quality broadsheet newspapers

These increase their awareness of the continuously evolving factors that have an impact on employee relationship management in different sectors.

Extensive classroom discussions of real scenarios develop learners' depth and breadth of understanding and help them prepare for the outcome 3 assessment.

Approaches to assessment

You should emphasise to learners that they:

- must clearly link the various elements of the assessment
- need to refer to their evidence presented in outcomes 1 and 2 to support their recommendations in outcome 3

Equality and inclusion

This unit is designed to be as fair and as accessible as possible with no unnecessary barriers to learning or assessment.

You must consider the needs of individual learners when planning learning experiences, selecting assessment methods or considering alternative evidence.

Guidance on assessment arrangements for disabled learners and those with additional support needs is available on the [assessment arrangements web page](#).

Information for learners

Human Resource Management: Employee Relationship Management (SCQF level 8)

This information explains:

- what the unit is about
- what you should know or be able to do before you start
- what you need to do during the unit

Unit information

This unit develops your knowledge and understanding of employee relationship management. You explain the concept and process, and develop knowledge and skills to apply that process in an organisational setting.

Before you start the unit, we recommend you have good communication and research skills. It would also be beneficial if you have had previous workplace experience.

During the unit you:

- define employee relationship management and explain the main related concepts
- explain the process of employee relationship management
- make recommendations for how to apply employee relationship management in a business context

You are assessed on your:

- knowledge and understanding of employee relationship management and its main related concepts
- understanding of the process of employee relationship management
- analysis of a given business situation, and the quality of your recommendations for employee relationship management in that situation

For your assessment, you gather evidence and create a convincing business case for employee relationship management in a particular business context.

Meta-skills

Throughout this unit, you develop meta-skills that are useful for the business sector.

Meta-skills are transferable behaviours and abilities that help you adapt and succeed in life, study and work. There are three categories of meta-skills: self-management, social intelligence and innovation.

Self-management

This meta-skill includes:

- analysing and interpreting data and factual information
- critically evaluating information from a variety of sources, for example case studies, reports and surveys
- maintaining accuracy and focus while using and interpreting data
- understanding business, moral and ethical reasons for employee relationship management
- understanding ethics, inclusion and diversity in considering employment-related practices
- understanding how core values underpin effective employee relationships
- understanding theoretical models and applying these to real-life situations or case studies
- carrying out independent research using credible, relevant and up-to-date information
- identifying gaps in your knowledge or understanding and carrying out self-directed learning

Social intelligence

This meta-skill includes:

- receiving and conveying a wide range of information
- conveying information to meet audience needs by adapting your communication style, tone and level of detail
- researching complex issues and filtering the relevant information
- finding and processing complex information from multiple sources and then summarising and presenting this information
- looking at employee relationship management from a wide variety of perspectives
- considering different stakeholders and their workplace relationships
- using emotional intelligence
- working effectively with others to co-create ideas, solve problems and share responsibilities
- having discussions, sharing ideas and promoting respect for diverse opinions
- taking ownership of your learning by planning effectively and completing all assessments
- setting goals and managing deadlines

Innovation

This meta-skill includes:

- investigating and analysing new and unfamiliar information and theories
- exploring theories in detail
- asking questions and exploring emerging HR trends while considering diverse viewpoints, cultures and business contexts
- exploring ideas and producing solutions
- considering innovative solutions to workplace concerns
- connecting employee relationship management theories to real-life situations or case studies
- interpreting theoretical models, data and information to make informed decisions
- analysing situations and issues around key aspects of employee relationship management
- evaluating, identifying and questioning when necessary

Learning for Sustainability

Throughout this unit, you will develop skills, knowledge and understanding of sustainability.

You learn about social, economic and environmental sustainability principles and how they relate to human resource management. You also develop an understanding of the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#).

Administrative information

Published: June 2026 (version 1.0)

Superclass: AJ

History of changes

Version	Description of change	Date

Please check [our website](#) to ensure you are using the most up-to-date version of this unit.

The information in this unit specification may be reproduced in support of Qualifications Scotland qualifications only on a non-commercial basis. If it is reproduced, Qualifications Scotland must be clearly acknowledged as the source. If it is to be reproduced for any other purpose, written permission must be obtained from permissions@qualifications.gov.scot.