

Human Resource Management Concentration for Students Matriculated After July 1, 2009

Background

The human resource management professional is an essential partner in developing and executing the strategy of the organization. Individuals working in the HR field are key players in ensuring the organization has the right people in the right places doing the right things at the right times. In effect, it is the HR professional's responsibility to ensure HR policies, procedures and practices are matched effectively with the organization's strategies. This includes functions such as:

- recruiting/staffing
- training
- planning and development
- reward systems including direct and indirect monetary rewards
- workplace safety and health
- employee/labor relations.

To perform these functions, an HR professional needs to interact with people across the organization and needs to have an understanding of these functions. The HR professional is in a trusted position; those who serve in this field are held to high standards of integrity, discretion and discernment.

Issues that currently face professionals in this field are numerous and complex. The legal, economic and political environments at the local, state, country and international levels impact how HR strategies can be achieved. In addition to understanding the broad framework of the relevant laws (e.g., for equal opportunity, income security, safety and health, labor-management relations), the HR professional also needs to understand the economic, social and political environments and their impact on HR activities within an organization. Of critical importance are issues such as globalization, rise of knowledge worker and technology. The HR function is frequently asked to implement policies and programs to enhance the organization's ability to thrive in environments undergoing rapid change.

Progression in the Concentration

To prepare to study in the HR field, students should develop an understanding of the environment through study in fields such as psychology, sociology, political science, economics, law and quantitative analysis, including statistics. Students also should ensure they have the ability to communicate in multiple forms (oral, written, electronically) with individuals and groups, and are able to analyze complex information.

Students pursuing an HRM concentration should build a strong foundation of knowledge in the functional areas of business including:

- accounting
- finance
- management
- operations
- marketing
- information systems.

It is also important to have an understanding of the changing nature of work and the work force, including such issues as workplace diversity and globalization. Students should also understand the interactions among individuals, groups and organizations through a study such as Organizational Behavior or Managerial Psychology.

Students pursuing an HRM concentration should meet the general guidelines for business, management and economics, and have a broad-based understanding of the HR function through study or experience.

HRM Knowledge/Studies

The HR function has four key responsibilities:

1. staffing (recruitment and selection)
2. compensation (direct and indirect)
3. training and development
4. employee/labor relations

Students seeking a broad-based HR career should build competencies in these four areas above through a combination of experience, studies and/or internships. Students could also consider taking an integrative (capstone) study to integrate their knowledge of HR and organizations. In addition, students could consider including studies that help in developing knowledge and competencies in specialized areas of HR. Possible topics include:

- employment and/or labor law
- diversity in the workplace
- dispute resolution in the workplace
- international HRM
- human resource planning
- human resource information systems
- change management
- performance management
- labor economics
- workplace safety and health.

Supporting Studies

Other supporting studies could focus on the organization or industry in which the student plans to work. These could include nonprofit management, retail management, manufacturing technology, health-care administration and other similar types of organizational studies.

Related Concentrations

In addition, students could also consider developing a degree plan in related concentrations such as training and development, gender/diversity/LGBT issues in the workplace, labor or industrial relations, or other areas of organizational studies.