



Course information 2016–17

MN3075 Human resource management

This course is about Human Resource Management (HRM) strategies, policies and practices. It examines the approach taken by commercial firms and other organisations to recruit, retain and motivate their employees. This includes everything from recruitment and selection techniques (which initiate the relationship between firm and employee), to the formal and informal institutions that determine how employees are managed, and all the way to policies on separation (which determine whether, and in what circumstances, employees are to be let go). The course follows the perspective adopted in many HRM textbooks, and looks at the subject from an organisational point of view, as well as acknowledging the wide range of factors which shape HRM strategies, policies and practices, including government and regulatory frameworks.

Aims and objectives

This course is designed to:

- give students an introduction to the key elements of human resource management.
- demonstrate how the social sciences can assist in understanding the management of human resources; and to examine and evaluate human resource policies and practices of organisations.
- help students examine the different theories which try to explain the relationship between HRM and organisational performance.
- develop students' ability to analyse and critically evaluate HR policies and practices.

Reading

For full details please refer to the reading list.

Bratton, J. and J. Gold *Human Resource Management: Theory and Practice*. 5th edition. (Basingstoke: Palgrave)

Kramar, R. and J. Syed *Human resource management in a global context*. (Basingstoke: Palgrave)

Torrington, D., L. Hall, S. Taylor and C. Atkinson *Fundamentals of Human Resource Management*. (FT/Prentice Hall)

Learning outcomes

At the end of this course and having completed the essential reading and activities students should be able to:

- ✓ describe the relationship between HRM and organisational performance and be able to critically evaluate the empirical evidence
- ✓ critically evaluate alternative perspectives on HR practices
- ✓ analyse the relationship between HR practices and their outcomes for the individual and organisation
- ✓ evaluate the effectiveness of different HR practices
- ✓ comment upon the limitations of the theories covered.

Assessment

This course is assessed by a three-hour unseen written examination.

Students should consult the appropriate *EMFSS Programme Regulations*, which are reviewed on an annual basis. The *Regulations* provide information on the availability of a course, where it can be placed on your programme's structure, and details of co-requisites and prerequisites.

Syllabus

This is a description of the material to be examined. On registration, students will receive a detailed subject guide which provides a framework for covering the topics in the syllabus and directions to the essential reading.

The syllabus uses as its organising framework a model of HRM built around four areas of activity: capabilities, motivation, employment relations and work organisation.

'Capabilities' include recruitment and selection, as well as learning and development. 'Motivation' covers individual performance and the psychological contract, reward systems, performance management and job design. 'Employment relations' include employee involvement and participation, organisational justice and diversity. Finally, 'work organisation' covers labour markets, high performance work systems and the state of HRM in contemporary organisations.

The syllabus examines current theoretical perspectives on the relationship between human resource practices and organisational performance. These include strategic HRM, organisational behaviour and employment relations frameworks, which offer different explanations of how HRM practices impact on organisational performance. The relationship between motivation, organisational commitment (defined as an individual's emotional attachment to an organisation) and both individual and corporate performance is central to understanding the effects of HRM practices on employees.

The skills demonstrated by students are expected to go beyond knowledge and comprehension. As well as demonstrating that they know and understand the major HRM policies and practices, theoretical frameworks and supporting empirical evidence, students are expected to be able to explain the relationship between different human resource policies and practices and the underlying theoretical frameworks (for example, by describing the relationship between performance management and goal setting theory, or pay strategy and different theories of motivation). These theoretical frameworks will then provide the basis for analysing and evaluating whether HRM practices are more or less likely to achieve their hypothesized outcomes. The potential limitations of each theory and the subsequent implications for organisational practice will also be considered.