

Programme Specification for MSc Human Resource Management

This document applies to Academic Year 2021/22 onwards

Table 1 Programme Specification for MSc

1.	Awarding institution/body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching institution	Worcester Business School
3.	Programme accredited by	Chartered Management Institute (CMI) and Chartered Institute of Personnel Development – (subject to approval - see Section 16)
4.	Final award or awards	MSc Human Resource Management PG Dip Human Resource Management PG Cert Human Resource Management
5.	Programme title	MSc Human Resource Management
6.	Pathways available	NA
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Standard taught programme and/or block delivery
8.	Mode of attendance and duration	FT or PT 1 year for FT mode PT – Normally 2-3 years
9.	UCAS Code	NA
10.	Subject Benchmark statement and/or professional body statement	This programme is informed by the QAA subject benchmark statement of Master's Degrees in Business and Management June 2015 <u><i>QAA subject benchmark statement</i></u> . It also meets the <u><i>QAA Masters Degree Characteristics</i></u>
11.	Date of Programme Specification preparation/ revision	Course approved August 2020 August 2021 – AQU amendments

12. Educational aims of the programme

The academic standards for Master's Awards in Business and Management stress the importance of professional development to the health and productivity of the UK and global economies. The purpose of this programme is to develop and enhance the practice of sustainable Human Resource Management and its potentially significant contribution to global business.

In particular, the MSc in Human Resource Management aims to provide students with the opportunity to develop their understanding of this wider business context and develop their Human Resource Management understanding and skills. In addition, the international context will be at the forefront in all modules, allowing students to explore and investigate the core content in a multicultural and global setting.

Students will develop the knowledge and abilities necessary to deal with a diverse range of people within the confines of the employment relationship, both nationally and internationally. Indeed, the programme will use the diverse student backgrounds to encourage cross-learning within the cohorts in terms of Human Resource Management practices from around the world. The three themes of internationalisation, employability and sustainability are central to the programme design and to the students' experience.

Specific exposure to the international business context will be provided through links to live case studies to enable students to gain an appreciation of real business contexts. Further exposure to relevant practice will happen through the internship pathway which is available as an option to all students. More details about the internship option is available in the learning, teaching and assessment section.

Sustainability and sustainable development will be explored throughout the course to enable students to develop a critical understanding and awareness of operating as a leader in sustainable and ethical business.

Students can select from a menu of optional modules to customise their degree and focus on their personal career goals. Flexibility is also provided through the structure of the course as students can join the course at two entry points each year.

The aims are as follows:

1. Provide the appropriate Human Resource knowledge and skills to manage in a range of national and global settings;
2. Provide the range of skills and knowledge required by Human Resource professionals within an organisational context;
3. Promote an appropriate pathway for the development of professional HR careers;
4. Develop the capacity of students to manage their own learning and development thus becoming 'reflective practitioners';
5. Develop the power of critical enquiry, logical thought, creative imagination and independent judgement in a context of application and research;
6. Develop and consolidate informed professional and ethical competence across a range of subject specialisms.

These aims fit with the benchmark standards detailed in the Master's Awards in Business and Management (QAA revised 2015) which are:

- The advanced study of organisations, their management and the changing external context in which they operate;
- Preparation for and/or development of a career in human resource management by developing skills at a professional level or as preparation for research or further study in the area;
- Development of the ability to apply knowledge and understanding of human resource management to complex issues, both systematically and creatively, to improve business and management practice;
- Enhancement of lifelong learning skills and personal development to be able to work with self-direction and originality and to contribute to the business at large.

13. Intended learning outcomes and learning, teaching and assessment methods

The MSc in Human Resource Management course comprises of three stages of study and separate awards relate to each stage at Post Graduate Certificate, Post Graduate Diploma, and finally the MSc. Each stage capable of standing alone as a coherent educational and vocationally relevant experience. The programme focuses on the theoretical concepts underpinning Human Resource Management and the application of these concepts and principles to practical case work. The core themes of Internationalisation, employability and sustainability are embedded throughout the programme at module level. The programme gives participants the opportunity to achieve and demonstrate the following learning outcomes:

Table 2 knowledge and understanding outcomes and which module/code they relate to

Knowledge and Understanding

LO no.	On successful completion of the named award, students will be able to:	Module Code/s	Award MSc
1.	Apply relevant knowledge and develop a critical appreciation of Human Resource Management in national and/or international contexts.	BMGT4322 BMGT4321 BMGT4323 BMGT4301 BMGT4309 BMGT4375	PGCert PGDip MSc
2.	Make informed judgements on a range of Human Resource performance issues and organisational challenges and select realistic and sustainable courses of action.	BMGT4301 BMGT4322 BMGT4321 BMGT4323 BMGT4309	PGCert PGDip MSc
3.	Critically examine how external environment impacts on Human Resource Management in a range of different contexts and how this then influences people management decision-making.	BMGT4322 BMGT4321 BMGT4301 BMGT4309	PGCert PGDip MSc
4.	Conduct research into Human Resource Management issues at postgraduate level and demonstrate the ability to apply these skills in real organisational settings.	BMGT4376	MSc

Table 3 cognitive and intellectual skills outcomes for module code/s

Cognitive and Intellectual skills

6.	Demonstrate advanced practical competencies necessary to succeed in Human Resource Management, including research and analytical skills, and the ability to be able to articulate thoughts and solutions clearly to others.	BMGT4301 BMGT4322 BMGT4321 BMGT4305 BMGT4309	PGCert PGDip MSc
7.	Demonstrate critical thinking and creativity: managing creative processes in self and others; dealing with uncertain and unfamiliar situations, organising thoughts and analysis.	BMGT4322 BMGT4321 BMGT4323 BMGT4301 BMGT4309 BMGT4376	PGDip MSc

Table 4 learning skills and capabilities related to employability outcomes for module code/s

Skills and capabilities related to employability

8	Investigate problems and propose viable solutions utilising analytical, creative and evaluative skills	BMGT4322 BMGT4321 BMGT4323 BMGT4301	PGCert PGDip MSc
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9.	Work productively and inclusively with diverse groups, teams and individuals and to communicate and implement agreed actions effectively and efficiently	BMGT4322 BMGT4321 BMGT4323 BMGT4301	PGCert PGDip MSc
10.	Apply problem investigation skills and develop consultancy and professional communication abilities	BMGT4322 BMGT4321 BMGT4323 BMGT4301 BMGT4309 BMGT4376	PGDip MSc

Table 5 transferable/key skills outcomes for module code/s

Transferable/key skills			
11.	Develop effective presentation and communication skills and show confidence in debating thoughts objectively.	BMGT4301 BMGT4322 BMGT4321 BMGT4376	PGDip MSc
12.	Reflect upon personal development to identify personal strengths and responsibility for sustained lifelong learning.	BMGT4321 BMGT4376	PGDip MSc

Learning, teaching and assessment

The programme is designed to develop an independent learning culture that will allow the student to be able to take learning from their programme of study and apply it systematically in a range of work and organisational settings. In this way the MSc is very focussed on the workplace and, where possible, students are encouraged to ground their learning with any experience of the workplace. The learning & teaching strategies employed demonstrate this synergy. They include case studies on real organisations to examine problem-based learning, blended learning from the Virtual learning Environment, group work simulating real-life business contexts, and, where appropriate, engaging with real business problems and delivering solutions to real business issues. These provide an effective link between theory, its application, and the development of well-rounded future Human Resource managers and leaders capable of working in a range of organisational contexts nationally and internationally.

An optional internship (up to 6 months in duration) is available to all students, taking place on completion of the taught modules. This internship will not be credit-rated but will allow the student to gain first-hand experience within a real business environment to enhance their future employability. Students may also choose to make use of this opportunity to base their Research Project on a business-related issue arising during the internship. There may be possibilities, with the employer's permission, to gain access to research participants and primary data, and to apply their understanding of theories and principles discussed within their programme to a live organisational setting.

Additionally, grounding is gained through the dissection, discussion, and interpretation of case studies; opportunities to work on live client projects/briefs; interaction with guest speakers and networking events with business leaders provided at local venues and at the Business School, other Universities and through the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

Teaching

Students are taught through a combination of interactive workshops, lectures, seminars, laboratory practical sessions, organisational fieldwork, practical activities, etc. Interactive workshops take a variety of formats and are intended to enable the application of learning through discussion and small group activities. Seminars enable the discussion and development of understanding of topics covered in lectures, and laboratory practical sessions are focused on developing subject specific skills and applied individual and group project work. Wherever possible, students are to reflect on their knowledge, experience and practice and to think creatively of potential solutions that impact positively on business performance and professional practice.

In addition, meetings with Personal Academic Tutors (PATs) are scheduled on three occasions during the year. Meetings are also scheduled with the Research Project supervisors are scheduled throughout the execution of the project.

The University places emphasis on enabling students to develop the independent learning capabilities that will equip them for lifelong learning and future employment, as well as academic achievement. A mixture of independent study, teaching and academic support from Student Services and Library Services, and also the Personal Academic Tutoring system enables students to reflect on progress and build up a profile of skills, achievements and experiences that will help them to flourish and be successful.

Contact time

Each module will have a weekly session of two hours. In a typical week full time students will have around 8 contact hours of teaching. For part time students, this will depend on the number of modules being taken. Typically, class contact time will be structured around:

- Delivering theoretical content to address contemporary marketing issues
- Practical tasks relating theory to practice
- Discussions and group activities
- Case studies and other exercises

Independent self-study

In addition to the contact time, a full time student is expected to undertake around 30 hours of personal self-study per week, making this equivalent in total with contact time to working full time. Typically, this will involve reading, researching, preparing for group work, rehearsing presentations, preparing for assessments and exams.

Independent learning is supported by a range of excellent learning facilities, including the Hive and library resources, the virtual learning environment, and extensive electronic learning resources.

Teaching staff

Students will be taught by a teaching team whose expertise and knowledge are closely matched to the content of the modules on the course.

Teaching is informed by research and consultancy, and most of lecturers on the course have a higher education teaching qualification or are Fellows of the Higher Education Academy.

Assessment

The course provides opportunities to test understanding and learning informally through the completion of practice or 'formative' assignments. Each module has one or more formal or 'summative' assessment which is graded and counts towards the overall module grade.

The precise assessment requirements for an individual student in an academic year will vary according to the mandatory and optional modules taken, but a typical formal summative assessment pattern, for a FT student is:

Semester 1:

- 1 Research proposal
- 1 Exam
- 2 individual reports
- 1 Group presentation
- 1 Essay

Semester 2:

- 1 Group presentation
- 1 Reflective essay
- 1 Individual report

Semester 3:

- Research Project

The precise assessment requirements for PT students will vary according to the modules selected.

All assignments will be internally marked and moderated as well as being externally examined as per the UW assessment policy.

14. Assessment strategy

The Assessment strategy has been designed to provide students with challenges appropriate for Masters of level modules. The programme is assessed through a range of summative coursework including presentations, case study, and assignments. Formative feedback will be provided by a range of approaches coherent with the peer focused nature of the programme; it will include feedback from tutors and students.

The overall purpose of the assessment strategy is to enable students to:

- Demonstrate that they have the intellectual rigour commensurate with a course of this nature and have developed the analytical skills expected of Master of Level study.
- Demonstrate the ability to synthesise appropriate theories, models and concepts from a range of modules studied on the course and apply them to critically evaluate real world scenarios
- Gain experience in working individually and as part of a team
- Maximise the opportunity to utilise and share their own experience(s) and studies to produce concise documents of the kind used in the management decision making process
- Receive continuous, regular and appropriate feedback throughout the course
- Develop the intellectual and practical abilities required of leaders and managers
- Exhibit creative and reflective ability in striving for continuous improvement, questioning ideas, testing traditional methods and received wisdom.

In designing the assessment strategy for the programme, the course team have been careful to align with the University's Assessment Policy and the University's Postgraduate (PGT) Grade Descriptors.

15. Programme structures and requirements

Table 6 award map for each level of the course

Module Code	Module Title	Status			
		Credits (Number)	PG Cert	PG Dip	MA/MSc/MBA
BMGT4321	International Human Resource Management	15	M	M	M
BMGT4322	Engaging the Diverse Workforce	15	M	M	M
BMGT4323	Coaching and Mentoring	15	O	M	M
BMGT4375	Research Methods	15	O	M	M
BMGT4301	Leadership and Change Management	15	O	M	M
BMGT4309	Managing Corporate Reputation	15	O	M	M
BMGT4317	Managing Across Cultures	15	O	O	O
BMGT4315	Cybersecurity and the Online Market	15	O	O	O
BMGT4316	Business Information Systems	15	O	O	O
BMGT4305	Corporate Entrepreneurship and Innovation	15	O	O	O
BMGT4318	Managing for Sustainable Futures	15	O	O	O
BMGT4376	Research Project (Dissertation)	60	N/A	N/A	M
Total Credits		180			
<p>PG Certificate in Human Resource Management To be awarded the PG Certificate, students must successfully complete 60 credits at Level 7 to include Mandatory modules BMGT4321 and BMGT4322 plus 30 credits of Optional modules.</p>					
<p>PG Diploma in Human Resource Management To be awarded the PG Diploma in Business Administration, students must successfully complete the PG Certificate plus all of the Mandatory modules (not including the Research Project), plus 30 credits of Optional modules to a total minimum of 120 credits at Level 7.</p>					
<p>Masters (MSc) in Human Resource Management To be awarded the MSc, students must complete a total of 180 credits at Level 7 including 60 credits from the Dissertation.</p>					

The course is composed of 8 x 15 credit taught modules and a 60 credit Research Project module. Student must take the mandatory modules shown above and can customise their degree to match their own interests from their choice of optional modules.

Full time students can finish the course in one year. Students who take the internship option will not be required to take extra modules, but their course duration will be extended by 6 months. Part time students would normally complete the course in no less than two years, but the maximum registration period is 6 years. They have the option of selecting up to 90 credits of study per year, but the Research Project should be the final module taken.

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

This award is located at Level 7 of the FHEQ and its design is influenced by the *FHEQ qualification descriptor*, *QAA subject benchmark statement* and the *QAA Masters Degree Characteristics*.

The MSc in Human Resource Management is designed to offer a type II award which provides a career development approach to the teaching of business and management subjects in a generalist area but with a strong practical and professional orientation to the curriculum.

Students will be able to reflect on and learn from any prior experience and thus be able to integrate new knowledge with past experience and apply it to new situations. However, Human Resource Management experience is not a pre-requisite and students will be provided with a variety of inputs in order to develop them as Human Resource leaders of the future. They will be able to challenge preconceptions and to remove subject and functional boundaries so as to handle complex situations holistically. They should also have particular strengths in analysing, synthesising and solving complex unstructured organisational problems. In addition to being able to communicate their findings, they should have developed the skills to implement agreed solutions effectively and efficiently. They should therefore have strongly developed interpersonal skills and to be able to interact effectively with a range of specialists.

This award has been designed to align with the professional standards of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) and the Chartered Institute of Management (CMI). The University is currently awaiting confirmation of accreditation (see Section 3).

17. Support for students

At WBS students are offered the best possible support to help them fully achieve their objectives of joining the course. The following points exhibit the various dimensions of support provided for students:

- Course induction including a brief course overview, introduction to the delivery pattern and assessment for the programme and specific modules, introduction to the VLE and learning resources. The induction helps students to settle down and adjust to the new teaching and learning environment. It also helps them from the beginning to set the expectations right, so they are fully aware of the standards at a masters level.
- VLE site, Blackboard, to provide learning resources and module information, exchange ideas and information between course members and staff
- Programme Leader as a point of contact for overarching programme questions and concerns
- Course handbook (available via the VLE) incorporating module outlines, key contacts and guidance for assessments
- Allocated Personal Academic Support Tutor to help students' integration into the University, the requirements of the programme and make the best use of learning resources available and to provide a key contact for support
- Access to course information, module results via the student online learning environment (SOLE)
- Student Representation to ensure making students' voice heard and to provide feedback to the on-going process of course improvement
- Support for disabled students via Student Services and the Disability and Dyslexia Service

<https://www2.worc.ac.uk/firstpoint/>

<https://www.worcester.ac.uk/life/help-and-support/services-for-students/home.aspx>

<https://www2.worc.ac.uk/disabilityanddyslexia/>

18. Admissions

Admissions policy

This course targets local and international individuals with or without Human Resource Management experience but with a desire to either run their own business, to lead an organisation in the future or to command a successful career in business management. The University of Worcester is an accessible place for higher education. It is committed to widening participation and encouraging diversity in the student population. Worcester Business School works closely with central student support services including the Admissions Office, the Disability and Dyslexia Service and the International Centre to support students from a variety of different backgrounds. We actively encourage and

welcome people from the widest range of economic and cultural backgrounds and value the contribution of mature learners.

Entry requirements

MSc in Human Resource Management course is available for aspiring individuals who can exhibit strong intellectual abilities and personal and professional skills. The minimum entry requirements are:

- A second class honours degree in any subject (or International students holding a qualification recognised as equivalent by the University).
- Students whose first language is not English are required to demonstrate proficiency to a minimum level of 6.5 IELTS (and minimum of 5.5 in each element) or equivalent

Recognition of Prior Learning

Students with relevant previous study at postgraduate level or with extensive experience may be considered eligible for recognition of prior learning. Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on 01905 855111.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at <http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm>

Admissions procedures

Entry to the MSc in Human Resource Management requires all applicants to complete an application form which gives a variety of information about the student's work experience, qualifications and motivation. These will be checked by the Admission tutor. Where information on the form is insufficient for a decision to be made the applicant will be requested to attend an interview with the Admission Tutor.

19. Regulation of assessment

The course operates under the University's Taught Courses Regulatory Framework

Requirements to pass modules

- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items

- Students who submit course work late but within 7 days (one week) of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 7 days (one week) will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure

- A student is entitled to re-sit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.
- A student will be notified of the reassessment opportunities in the results notification issued via the secure student portal (SOLE). It is the student's responsibility to be aware of and comply with any reassessments.

Requirements for Awards

Table 7 requirements for awards

Award	Requirement
PG Cert	Passed a minimum of 60 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
PG Dip	Passed a minimum of 120 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map
Masters (MA/MSc/MBA/MTL)	Passed a minimum of 180 credits at level 7, as specified on the award map

PG Cert and PG Dip awards are unclassified. The awards of Masters may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

Classification of Masters

The classification will be determined by whichever of the following two methods results in the higher classification.

Method 1

- a) Candidates will be awarded a Distinction where they have attained an average of A- (PD) or higher from the credit achieved with the University for the award.
- b) Candidates will be awarded a Merit where they have attained an average of C+ (PM) or higher from the credit achieved with the University for the award.

Method 2

- a) Candidates will be awarded a Distinction, irrespective of their other module results, where they have attained 90 credits at grade A- (PD) or higher
- b) Candidates will be awarded a Merit, irrespective of their other module results, where they have attained 90 credits at grade C+ (PM) or higher

Candidates will be awarded a Pass where they have not fulfilled the rules for Method 1 or Method 2, but are eligible for the award of a Masters.

For further information on honours degree classification, see the [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#).

20. Graduate destinations, employability and links with employers

Graduate destinations

The job market for the MSc in Human Resource Management is strongly affected by the state of the global economy and includes a wide range of employers, with areas such as the UK Public Sector & NHS, software companies and publishing houses amongst some of the more recent employers.

Student employability

Employability is a key element of the philosophy of the MSc in Human Resource Management course design. The course is structured around producing competitive graduates ready for the current challenges of the job market. They are taught a wide range of current and relevant topics and trained to exhibit the best attributes and qualities of critical, open-minded, inclusive and skilful individuals. Besides, the international nature of the candidates, the diversity of expertise and backgrounds together with the UW commitment to the sustainability agenda will play a crucial role in shaping the learning experience and the qualities of the graduates which will have a profound impact on their employability.

Students develop the skills and knowledge required to perform as 'thinking practitioners'. Students are helped to develop effective Continuous Professional Development Plans and update their C.V. to assist future job searching. Students are also encouraged to seek CIPD membership as soon as their professional experience allows. All students have access to University support services including careers advice. There is an option for students to attend a professional work placement during the programme to provide real Human Resource Management experience and provide a context for the dissertation.

Links with employers

The course team are in contact with a wide range of organisations and also the professional body (CIPD). The team communicate with these professionals to ensure that the theoretical and practical elements of the course reflect the real-world situation and that students are armed with the up-to-date knowledge and competencies that they will need for a career in Human Resource Management.

The Business School works closely with a number of professional organisations including the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, Institute of Commercial Management, Chartered Institute of Marketing, Chartered Institute of Management Chartered Institute of Public Relations, Chartered Institute of Management Accountants, Association of Chartered Certified Accountants, Institute of Financial Accountants, Chartered Institute of Payroll Professionals, and British Computer Society.

The Business School has worked with a number of business clients in developing and delivering its programmes. These include – The NHS (a range of Primary Care and Acute Trusts); Local Government (a range of County, District and Unitary Authorities); West Mercia, Warwickshire, Gloucestershire and Staffordshire Constabularies; Ministry of Defence and The Royal Air Force; Her Majesty's Prison Service; Royal Mail; Financial Services Organisations (e.g. Lloyds TSB, HBOS Plc, Clerical Medical, NFU Mutual and Virgin Money); Housing Associations, Southco, Malvern Instruments, Allpay Limited, G4S Secure Solutions, Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service and Hitachi Capital.

The Business School has well-developed working relations with the local business community many of whom contribute to postgraduate programmes through the internship option to give students a real-world insight into the future world of work and/or to provide live client briefs to students. Senior managers from this business community have been involved in the design of this programme. They were consulted on the skills and attributes they expect to see in our graduates as well as the knowledge and academic competencies they want our graduates to exhibit.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if s/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.