

**University of Plymouth**

Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Business

Plymouth Business School

**Programme Specification**

**MA in Human Resource Management**

4328 (1 year FT)

4331 (2 year PT)

Final Approved Version  
September 2020

1. **MA in Human Resource Management (1 year full time)**  
**MA in Human Resource Management (2 year part time)**

**Exit awards**

**Postgraduate Certificate**

**Postgraduate Diploma**

**HECoS code:** 100085 / Human Resource Management

2. **Awarding Institution:** University of Plymouth

**Teaching institution:** University of Plymouth

3. **Accrediting body:**

Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD)

Date of re-accreditation: 2020

#### **4. Distinctive Features of the MA in HRM and the Student Experience**

**Appeal:**

The programme is designed to satisfy the needs of those who are either seeking a career in HR or have already started their career in HR and therefore require a professionally recognised qualification as well as an academic award. It may be taken either full or part time and thus can attract a diverse range of students. The attraction to students who are already working and at different stages of their careers means that student groups include a broad range of HR related occupations and levels of seniority. The programme attracts students from all sectors of the labour market, public, private and not for profit. These factors provide variety in the cohorts studying for the qualification and greatly enhance the learning experiences of all individuals.

**CIPD membership:**

Professional accreditation has been attained from the CIPD for the MAHRM so that upon successful completion of the programme, students will have the necessary knowledge criteria to upgrade to Associate, Chartered or Fellow membership (depending upon their level of work experience).

**Student membership of the CIPD:**

A requirement of the programme is that students must become student members of the CIPD. Not only does this help with obtaining jobs in HR but it also provides a rich resource of research and professional guidance which is only available to members of the Institute. The CIPD website is an interactive site of global HR news and information, focusing on the big issues of the day, and drawing on the views of top HR academics, practitioners and thinkers. The on line People Management feed accelerates the development of the website news and comment, strengthening its coverage of the HR dimension of the moving business agenda as it happens daily and hourly. At the same time, the People Management magazine is a monthly, features-led magazine providing more challenging and thought-provoking articles, and more in-depth sharing of best and next practice.

**CIPD Branch Support:**

As members of the CIPD, students automatically become members of the local branch which in this case is the Devon and Cornwall branch. This branch is also sub divided into five area groups in recognition of the large geographical spread of Devon and Cornwall. Through this branch, students have access to a variety of support mechanisms which will sustain them through their programme of study and beyond into their HR professional career. They can utilise a wide network of professionals with whom mentoring can be arranged, an active branch programme of events focussing on a broad range of topics and notification of local HR job opportunities which may not be published elsewhere. Branch members can also offer opportunities for research or project work within their own organisations. The MAHRM regularly hosts professional events with the CIPD branch, which are attended by practitioners across the two counties as well as by our students.

**Research focus:**

The HR & Leadership subject group includes a number of professors and other active researchers who publish in highly regarded national and international journals. This research has had an impact on government and organisational policy in a number of HR related fields. Our research also feeds directly into the programme through teaching, public seminars and dissertation supervision.

**Variety of teaching and learning:**

The programme offers a wide variety of teaching and learning methods. From traditional lectures and seminars to group work and case study analysis to the use of digital social media, portfolios and the production of our own podcasts.

**Alumni and network of past students:**

Many of our past students remain in the area and are happy to provide mentoring, work experience and general support. They also move into positions of influence in their organisations and are therefore instrumental in helping students to progress and allowing access to information and potential research projects. We have our own LinkedIn group and all students are encouraged to set up their LinkedIn profiles during the induction period.

**Guest speakers:**

Extensive use is made of guest speakers. This enhances the practitioner and practical focus elements of the programme. It brings an added dimension of current practice and organisational issues directly to the classroom. It also alerts students to the difficulties of uniting academic theory with professional practice as well as the dilemma of how to challenge the dominant discourses of managerialism and free market philosophies so prevalent in the current economy.

**Employability:**

Students who are also employed are actively encouraged to apply and transfer their learning directly to their employing organisations. Many modules give the opportunity to conduct work based assignments. The benefits to both student and employer are significant. The HR Research Report offers students an opportunity for a piece of independent, in depth research which can ultimately challenge professional practice within that organisation. If students require work experience in HR, this can be arranged by the University Futures centre. Students are able to undertake 2-4 week placements in a variety of organisations

**English Language Support:**

The Plymouth Business School provides educational, social and language support for all of our international students. Students can access extra language classes as well as individually-tailored one to one support.

**Delivery at other sites:**

The programme can be delivered at other sites although this would be the subject of an inter-institutional agreement and CIPD approval.

## 5. Relevant QAA Subject Benchmark Group

Subject benchmark statements provide a means for the academic community to describe the nature and characteristics of programmes in a specific subject or subject area. They also represent general expectations about standards for the award of qualifications at a given level in terms of the attributes and capabilities that those possessing qualifications should have demonstrated.

Subject benchmark statements provide support to HEIs in pursuit of internal quality assurance. They enable the learning outcomes specified for a particular programme to be reviewed and evaluated against agreed general expectations about standards.

The relevant statement for this programme is the **QAA Master's degrees in business and management (2015)**.

[https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-business-and-management-15.pdf?sfvrsn=1997f681\\_16](https://www.qaa.ac.uk/docs/qaa/subject-benchmark-statements/sbs-business-and-management-15.pdf?sfvrsn=1997f681_16)

This subject benchmark statement covers all types of master's degrees in business and management including both specialist and generalist degrees for a range of participants, from new graduates to those with considerable work experience. In order to identify target groups, programme objectives and intended learning outcomes, a typology has been developed to provide guidance on this wide array of degrees. In the case of the MA in Human Resource Management, it is classified as a Type 1. This means that it is a **specialist master's degree** either for career entry or career development. The MA in HRM is designed for career preparation in the HR or related profession. It aims to prepare individuals to be operationally effective in the specialist subject area or as a preparation for an academic career in that subject area.

## 6. Programme Structure: MA HRM (full and part time)

\*(full time students will study all 180 credits in one academic year)

Year (part time route)*	Semester One (13 Weeks)	Semester two (13 Weeks)
<b>One (80 credits)</b>	HRL715 Leading Managing & Developing People (20 credits)  HRL701 Contemporary HRM in Context (20 credits)	HRL702 Employee Resourcing (20 credits)  HRL703 Managing Conflict & Employment Relations (20 credits)
<b>Two (100 credits) *</b>	HRL704 HR Research Methods (20 credits)  HRL705 Managing Equality & Diversity (20 credits)	HRL714B International HRM (20 credits)  HRL713 HR Research Project (40 credits) <b>Semester 2 &amp; Semester 3 (summer)</b>

## 7. Programme Aims

The programme is intended to:

1. Enable participants to develop the necessary skills, competencies and knowledge for effective, ethical and contemporary HR management in a business and organisational context.
2. Provide students with the opportunity to develop the qualities needed for employment in complex and unpredictable HRM and related environments.
3. Adopt a critical perspective on theory and research, and support the application of learning to students' work environments.
4. Provide the opportunity for students to pursue some subjects to greater depth, to seek out an avenue of HRM enquiry and to carry out independent research through the undertaking of an HR Research Project.

## 8. Programme Intended Learning Outcomes

### 8.1

#### **Knowledge and Understanding**

On successful completion graduates should have developed:

**1** A systematic understanding of knowledge orientated to the field of HRM and related academic disciplines.

**2** A critical awareness of current problems, debates, issues and insight as informed by these specialist fields of study, and by a developing sense of 'good' and ethical professional practice.

**3** A conceptual understanding that enables the student to critically reflect upon and evaluate current research, relevant scholarship and professional practice.

**4** Knowledge and understanding that helps develop a critical framework for assessing the credibility and suitability of various techniques and practices.

#### **Teaching & Learning Methods and Strategies:**

A variety of teaching and learning methods will be utilised in the development of these understandings. These will range from formal lectures, relatively unstructured group discussions, practical workshop activities, student presentations, external visits and outside speakers. Given the relatively high levels of experience of many of the part time participants, there will be an emphasis on shared knowledge, developed in dialogue and based on practice. For those less acquainted with practice issues more emphasis will be placed on case studies and other problem-solving activities. Students will be expected, and directed, to read from a range of sources, including academic journals.

#### **Assessment strategies:**

Outcomes 1-4 will be assessed by a mixed diet of written assessments, group and individual presentations and open book examinations, guided by the need to assess both formal knowledge but also practical understanding and application.

## **8. 2**

### **Cognitive and intellectual skills**

On completion graduates should have developed:

**1** The ability to evaluate competing evidence critically, reach conclusions and present findings.

**2** The ability to problem solve within the context of the business environment and with particular emphasis on the management of people.

**3** The ability to synthesise and interpret evidence from a variety of sources to effect improvement in the management of people.

**4** The ability to utilise a variety of theoretical and research approaches in order to systematically and creatively deal with complex issues in the study and/or practice of HRM.

**5** The ability to conduct research into business and human resource management issues.

#### **Teaching & Learning Methods and Strategies:**

Intellectual skills are developed in a variety of ways. Students learn by completing case studies, role play exercises, group and individual exercises, the presentation of findings and designing and completing a research project. Lectures and seminars develop critical thought and encourage deep analysis of complex research issues. Students will be encouraged to reflect on different theoretical approaches to the management of people and to consider how they can apply to organisational settings. The learners are also encouraged to develop intellectual skills further by independent study.

#### **Assessment strategies:**

Writing essays assess students' ability to understand and apply analytical frameworks. Group reports assess their skills in synthesising information, complex problem solving and applying methodologies. Case studies further refine these diagnostic skills, particularly in promoting decision making capabilities. Presentations will support the development of students' skills in identifying and reviewing key concepts. The HR Research Project necessitates research and critical evaluation of an HR topic.

### **8. 3**

#### **Key and Transferable Skills**

On completion graduates should have developed:

- 1** An ability to work towards the achievement of set objectives, with sensitivity to the diversity in people and different situations, either as a group leader or team member (group working).
- 2** The capacity to select and utilise appropriate learning resources in relation to the specific task (learning resources).
- 3** The capacities to listen, influence, persuade and communicate clearly through written and oral means in both academic and professional settings (communications).
- 4** The necessary skills required for life long independent and reflective learning (self-evaluation and problem solving).
- 5** The capability to complete research and management tasks with minimum guidance (management of information and autonomy).

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies:**

Students will be directed towards various resources and databases for the purpose of background reading and project research. Students will interact and communicate within seminars, role play and other group work enhancing leadership, team, negotiating, and influencing skills. Students will also have to work autonomously as well as interactively within group exercises to collect and analyse information from a range of sources. Work must be presented in both written and oral forms.

#### **Assessment strategies:**

Students will be assessed through a range of opportunities throughout the programme. They will be required to work on various assignments; both group and individual- based, including seminars, workshops, dissertation work, individual and group podcasts, role-plays, case studies, simulated business games, class presentations and peer to peer discussions.

## **8. 4**

### **Employment Related Skills**

On completion graduates should have developed:

**1** The skills to critically reflect on their own performance to inform continuing personal and professional development.

**2** A critical understanding of the workplace with particular reference to the successful management of the employment relationship using relevant theories, techniques and problem solving skills.

**3** Initiative and personal responsibility for their own learning which can then become part of their future career development.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies:**

Students may enhance their career planning and development in a variety of ways throughout the programme. They have access to the University Careers Service, the Futures Centre, the local branch of the CIPD, guest speakers from outside organisations and fellow students who are already working in the HR profession and can facilitate networking opportunities. Module tutors possess both professional HR experience and skills in career planning and development. Realistic problem-based learning scenarios will allow students to develop tactical and strategic decision-making skills in a range of organisational settings.

#### **Assessment strategies:**

The HR Research Project will allow students to work in a practical employment context, collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data with a view to influencing and developing organisational policy.

## **8. 5**

### **Practical Skills**

On completion graduates should have developed:

- 1** Appropriate people management and development policies and strategies, maximising the contribution, growth and well-being of employees including an ethical sensibility towards the practice of HRM.
- 2** An application of appropriate advice in relation to the legal dimensions involved in the management of people.
- 3** The implementation of effective processes for the recruitment, selection, reward, retention, learning and development of employees.
- 4** Working in partnership, including negotiation, with employee representatives to develop procedures and processes that enhance the commitment of employees and resolve work conflict.
- 5** Appropriate recommendations concerning arrangements for the organisation and delivery of people management services, including ways of assessing the contribution of people management to organisational success.

#### **Teaching and Learning Methods and Strategies:**

Students are required to apply their knowledge of key skills to practical situations, for example interpreting and applying the law (4), carrying out analysis of the strategy of organisations and relate these to the management of people (1). Practical exercises such as role play (with tutor and peer review) are used to develop key employee relations skills (4). Case studies and role plays conducted as group exercises with tutor feedback will enable students to develop ethical awareness, employee relations skills, the effective management of the human resource cycle and in organising and assessing the delivery of HR services (1-5).

#### **Assessment strategies:**

Practical skills (1-5) are assessed by a mix of in class tests (open book) , individual and group assignments and other assessed exercises which are selected to best reflect the subject being studied. In addition an HR Research Project is produced.

## **9. Admissions Criteria, including APCL, APEL and DAS arrangements**

i) The admissions policy for the MA in Human Resource Management (full time and part time) complies with the University Policy for Admissions to Postgraduate Taught Programmes of Study. Admissions to the programme will be determined by the Programme Leader who will require evidence to support applications, for example, academic transcripts or degree certificates.

The normal entry qualifications are:-

1. At least a second class honours degree from a UK university, **or**
2. An equivalent award from an overseas institution, **or**
3. An equivalent professional qualification, or
4. Other qualifications and/or experience that have demonstrated that the applicant has acquired knowledge and skills sufficient to be considered as equivalent to a degree and can meet the challenges and demands of this programme, **and**
5. Work experience: where the applicant does not have a degree then a minimum 5 years relevant work experience is required.

At the discretion of the Programme Leader, applicants may be required to undertake a piece of written work to indicate their suitability, for example, a short literature review on a relevant topic and/or an interview.

For candidates whose first language is not English, evidence is required of spoken and written ability in English. This must be a minimum test score of 6.5 for IELTS or 575 (paper based) and 232 (computer based) for TOEFL.

Two satisfactory references will be required from referees.

All applicants will be expected to give reasons for their application and demonstrate their commitment to a career in HR.

## **10. Progression criteria for Final and Intermediate Awards**

As per university regulations.

## **11. Exceptions to Regulations**

Not applicable.

## **12. Transitional Arrangements**

Not applicable

## 13. Mapping

### 13.1 Programme Intended Learning Outcomes against Modules

Intended Learning outcomes	A 1	A 2	A 3	A 4	B 1	B 2	B 3	B 4	B 5	C 1	C 2	C 3	C 4	C 5	D 1	D 2	D 3	E 1	E 2	E 3	E 4	E 5	
<b>Modules</b>																							
<b>CHRMIC</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>LM&amp;DP</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>HRRM</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>IHRM</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>MC&amp;ER</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>ER</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>HRRP</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
<b>ME&amp;D</b>	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

#### KEY TO MODULES:

**CHRMIC: Contemporary HRM in Context**

**LM&DP: Leading Managing & Developing People**

**HRRM: HR Research Methods**

**HRRP: HR Research Project**

**IHRM: International HRM**

**MC& ER: Managing Conflict & Employment Relations**

**ER: Employee Resourcing**

**ME&D: Managing Equality & Diversity**

## 13.2 Assessment Strategy against Modules

The following diagram clearly illustrates the variety and weighting of the individual modules' assessment strategies. University of Plymouth takes its responsibility for ensuring the quality and reliability of assessment very seriously. It recognises that high quality assessment practices are an important element of the student experience and that the outcomes of assessment influence students' future lives. The University Mission Statement emphasises the importance of providing teaching of international repute (this includes assessment) and the University Teaching and Learning Strategy recognises the need for well-designed assignments

<http://www.plymouth.ac.uk/files/extranet/docs/TLD/Uni%20Strategy%20Booklet.pdf>

<b>Module</b>	<b>Assessment Strategy</b>
HRL701 Contemporary HRM in Context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Class Test (60%)</li> <li>• Group Presentation (40%)</li> </ul>
HRL715 Leading, Managing & Developing People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative assessment linked to case study</li> <li>• Pre-seen case study, in-class test (100%)</li> </ul>
HRL704 HR Research Methods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative assessment</li> <li>• Research proposal (including reflective journal) (100%)</li> </ul>
HRL703 Managing Conflict & Employment Relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Report</li> <li>• Organisational Analysis (100%)</li> </ul>
HRL702 Employee Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative assessment</li> <li>• Individual Report (100%)</li> </ul>
HRL714B International HRM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative assessment</li> <li>• Individual Essay (100%)</li> </ul>
HRL705 Managing Equality & Diversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative assessment</li> <li>• Individual Essay (100%)</li> </ul>
HRL713 HR Research Project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formative assessment</li> <li>• Individual HR research project including reflective journal (100%)</li> </ul>

### 13.3 Skills mapping

<b>Modules</b>	<b>CHRMIC</b>	<b>LMDP</b>	<b>HRRM</b>	<b>HRRP</b>	<b>IHRM</b>	<b>MCER</b>	<b>ER</b>	<b>MED</b>
Skills								
Managing Interpersonal Relationships	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Negotiation				*		*	*	*
Managing Conflict						*	*	*
Presentation	*	*	*		*	*	*	*
Report Writing	*		*	*	*			
Reflective		*	*	*				
Career Planning							*	
Group Working	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
IT	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Interpreting Financial Information	*			*				
Creating a Podcast							*	
Project Planning	*		*	*				
Problem Solving	*			*		*		
Post Graduate Study	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*