Programme Specification

UNIVERSITY OF WESTMINSTER

Course record information

Name and level of final award	• Master of Arts - Human Resource Management The award is Bologna FQ-EHEA second cycle degree or diploma compatible
Name and level of intermediate awards	• Postgraduate Diploma (Pg Dip) - Human Resource Management • Postgraduate Certificate (Pg Cert) - Human Resource Management
Awarding body/institution	University of Westminster
Teaching institution	University of Westminster
Status of awarding body/institution	Recognised Body
Location of delivery	Primary: Central London
Language of delivery and assessment	English
QAA subject benchmarking group(s)	Business and Mangement (Master's)
Professional statutory or regulatory body	Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development
Westminster course title, mode of attendance and standard length	• MA Human Resource Management FT, Full-time, September or January start - 1 year standard length • MA Human Resource Management PT, Part-time day/evening, September or January start - 2 years standard length • MA Human Resource Management PT, Part-time evening only, September or January start - 2 years standard length
Valid for cohorts	From 2025/6

Admissions requirements

There are standard minimum entry requirements for all postgraduate courses. Students are advised to check the standard requirements for the most up-to-date information. For most courses a decision will be made on the basis of your application form alone. However, for some courses the selection process may include an interview to demonstrate your strengths in addition to any formal entry requirements. More information can be found here: https://www.westminster.ac.uk/courses/postgraduate/how-to-apply.

Aims of the programme

The MA Human Resource Management course (MA HRM) has been designed to fulfil two different sets of requirements: those of the University of Westminster for Masters programmes; and those of the CIPD, specified by its qualifications framework. This means that students successfully completing the course will be awarded a Masters qualification by the University. In addition, the MA HRM meets and aligns to the core knowledge and core behaviour standards at Chartered level of the CIPD Profession Map. It is this plus experience (via the Upgrading process) that will equal CIPD Chartered membership.

The rationale for the course is to expose students to a coherent and specialised body of knowledge relevant to the theory and practice of human resource management. The aim of the MA in Human Resource Management (MA HRM) is therefore to provide students with the opportunities to explore, analyse and research Human Resource Management theory, practices and policies in order that they might pursue a professional or academic career in Human Resource

Management on the basis of their critical evaluation and appreciation of:

The theory and practice of organisations and human resource management.
The nature of management consultancy skills, analytic and diagnostic techniques.
The analysis of economic, global and local labour market factors influencing corporate strategy. The ethical requirements within the workplace.
How the human resource specialist deploys knowledge-based analytical and problem-solving skills and competencies at both operational and strategic levels.
The course aims to expose students to a wide range of contemporary perspectives on key developments in human resource management and organisational analysis providing access to a range of alternative views, thereby encouraging them to explore relevant HRM issues and what these mean for different groups of individuals and organisations at local and national level. There is a focus on how research informs advances in professional knowledge and course participants should both demonstrate originality in the application of such knowledge and reflect on their own personal learning in the context of their continuing professional development. In this way course participants are expected to exhibit the qualities of 'thinking performers', dealing with complex issues systematically and creatively and demonstrating originality in tackling and solving problems.

Consequently, the programme aims to enable students to build a body of practical skills and theoretical knowledge - from the operational through the tactical to the strategic - around the management of organisations and then to apply this knowledge to management problems and situations that affect professional practice. Students will, therefore, be able to diagnose problems, test assumptions, and offer apposite solutions.

As well as preparing students for further study or career progression, the MA HRM encourages them to:

Develop a critical approach to HRM theories, literature, issues and practice.
Develop and use problem-solving, analytical, evaluative and interpersonal skills.
Continue their development of analytical, investigative research skills by designing a critical investigation into a relevant HRM topic of their choice in an area of human resource management.
To this end the course endeavours to provide students with an intellectually challenging learning environment that is commensurate with Masters' level study and promote lifelong learning.

Besides preparing students for further study or career progression, the MA HRM aims to promote the acquisition of skills that will enable students completing the course to:

Interpret how the wider environment affects organisations through an analysis of factors in the business environment and continuing emphasis on horizontal, vertical and functional integration.
Commit to continuing professional development (CPD) showing an ability to plan and review, systematically and continuously, their personal development.
Demonstrate competence in a wide range of generic and specific professional skills (e.g. business understanding, strategic thinking, professional and ethical behaviour and intuitive/creative thinking, communication and interpersonal skills).

The distinctive features of MA HRM are as follows:

- CIPD Membership - University pays the joining fee and the first period of membership

- The course is a blend of theory and practice to enable students to be able to apply what they have learnt in a workplace setting.

- There are skills development workshops to enhance employability.

- There is a wide range of specialist options.

- All assessment is based on the premise of authentic tasks which mirror tasks students could expect to encounter in the workplace.

- There is an annual HRM conference where keynote speakers aim to improve students' professional job acquisition.

Employment and further study opportunities

Today's organisations need graduates with both good degrees and skills relevant to the workplace, i.e. employability skills. The University of Westminster is committed to developing employable graduates by ensuring that:

- Career development skills are embedded in all courses

- Opportunities for part-time work, placements and work-related learning activities are widely available to students

- Staff continue to widen and strengthen the University's links with employers in all sectors, involving them in curriculum design and encouraging their participation in other aspects of the University's career education and guidance provision

- Staff are provided with up-to-date data on labour market trends and employers' requirements, which will inform the service delivered to students.

Those completing the course can be expected to find employment within HRM (either in the UK or abroad), further their existing HR careers, or to continue their studies in HR related fields. Providing, as it does, a higher degree qualification in a well-established management area, the course enables students to enhance their career prospects and marketability in the professional practice of HRM. Past students have gone on to become consultants (internal and external), HR managers, change management specialists, HR business partners, operations managers, civil servants, and mediators. Organisations that have employed our students include Arcadia, the BBC, Harrods, PwC, HSBC and the Royal Household.

A Master's degree in combination with a CIPD qualification will enhance student employability and marketability. Membership of the CIPD will enable students to attend Branch meetings, network with other professionals in the field and augment their CPD.

What will you be expected to achieve?

Course learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements on what successful students have achieved as the result of learning.

These are threshold statements of achievement the learning outcomes broadly fall into four categories:

The overall knowledge and understanding you will gain from your course (KU)

Graduate attributes are characteristics that you will have developed during the duration of your course (GA)

Professional and personal practice learning outcomes are specific skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course (PPP)

Key transferable skills that you will be expected to have gained on successful completion of the course. (KTS)

Level 7 course learning outcomes: upon completion of Level 7 you will be able to:

- 001 To systematically evaluate the human resource function and latest developments in professional practice. (KU CS)

- 002 Effectively explain the impact of social, cultural, economic and political contexts on human resource management with the view to evaluate factors in the work environment likely to enhance or inhibit the performance of individuals and teams. (KU KTS)

- 003 Identify and evaluate appropriate academic, organisational and practitioner evidence to aid effective problem solving and decision making in relation to HRM policies, practices, and strategies. (KU KTS SS)

- 004 Analyse and apply appropriate HRM strategies that contribute to organisational effectiveness, while assessing the impact on, and implications of EDI and sustainable development. (KU KTS)

- 005 Have a strong understanding of the relationship between HRM and the business context and be able to evaluate situations from a corporate and HR perspective. (KU KTS CS)

- 006 Examine processes of group functioning and explain how such knowledge might be deployed in leading, negotiating, motivating and handling conflict within groups. (KTS)

- 007 Analyse the range and nature of change impacting on organisations and propose HR strategies that can

contribute to the effective management of change, and promote an organisational culture that is agile and "change-ready". (KTS)

- 008 Research an area of HRM, selecting and justifying chosen methodologies, analysing data and effectively synthesising and communicating findings, conclusions and recommendations. (KU KTS SS CS)

- 009 Reflect on personal performance and demonstrate the ability to plan for personal development as an HR professional. (PPP SS)

- 010 Demonstrate specialist subject knowledge and ethical and professional decision-making required for effective achievement in the HRM arena. (KU KTS SS)

How will you learn?

Learning methods

The teaching and learning strategy within Westminster Business School is governed by the University's Learning and Teaching Strategy. The MA HRM course has been designed and developed with Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) and Sustainable Development (SD) at its heart, reflecting the University's commitment to these, as will be explained below:

The Teaching and Learning strategy sets out three aims:

(i) to teach in a way that is practical, active, inquiry/problem-focused, and socially engaged. For MA HRM this means:

- Practical and active modes of delivery on all modules.

- Actively engaging students in research through inquiry.

- Varied, authentic and inclusive means of assessment.

- Classrooms configured to promote active learning – where possible we teach face to face and in a bistro style or workshop environment.

(ii) to provide personalised learning and flexibility for students. For MA HRM students this means:

- An inclusive, accessible, decolonising and diversifying curriculum.

- Technology enabled classrooms and blended learning.

- Relationships developed through 'close learning' (tutorials and small groups)

- Effective, joined-up academic and professional student support systems.

(iii) to embed critical thinking, employability, enterprise and global fluency in our courses and in co-curricular activities. For MA HRM this means:

- Employability skills, transferable skills and digital skills are embedded within modules.

- The course is mapped against the CIPD criteria for Chartered Membership.

- Short term outward mobility activities are available in the form of internships organised by the University.

- An internationalised and diversified curriculum has been devised.

Learning methods on MA HRM

The learning environment encourages active, experiential and reflective learning by participants, with scope for group work and problem-based learning using case studies and analysis, synthesis and evaluation. The learning experience requires independent learning, critical evaluation, reflection, discussion and debate, as well as the opportunity, through the project, to research, in significant depth, a relevant topic. Students are encouraged to work together in an inclusive manner; collaboration and team working are encouraged, although team based summative assessment does not appear on the programme.

A key feature of study within the MA HRM is the explicit development of transferable skills and aptitudes relevant for personal and career development within the HRM profession. One of the course aims focuses particularly on skill development, and the module Skills of the Manager/Consultant aims specifically to enable students to develop the interpersonal management skills needed for acting as an internal and external consultant to organisations. The module has been specifically designed to assist participants to define, develop and refine those managerial skills that will aid them in employment. Transferable professional and personal skills form part of the learning outcomes and assessment strategies a number of the modules on the course.

An annual HRM Conference and a number of skills-based workshops enhance student learning. Conference speakers are expert practitioners and academics who address a range of topics on a particular HR issue.Skills- based workshops include unconscious bias, leadership and teams skills, coaching and mentoring, disciplinary handling and consultancy skills.

Teaching methods

Teaching is through blended learning which involves a combination of classroom based or online lectures and seminars involving a variety of methods of delivery and student participation including exercises, group work, presentations, discussions, videos, workshops, role-plays and computer-aided techniques. Sessions typically involve a combination of tutor input and student participation and activity. Online sessions account for no more than one third of the activity and in some modules are not present. The on-line sessions are mainly didactic in nature. In line with the 'thinking, ethical performer' ethos, reflective involvement in the learning process is regarded as essential.

There is a degree of self-directed learning – based around information provided for each module, involving structured reading, analysis and problem solving. Students' personal contributions will therefore be a critical factor in influencing the successful achievement of the learning outcomes. Students' own current experience will be used wherever possible and, where appropriate, emphasis is placed on self-organised and group learning.

As indicated above, an annual HRM Conference and Skills-based workshops also enhance student learning. Overall, we aim to ensure that we employ a range of methods in order to satisfy a broad range of preferred learning styles, in an inclusive environment which is open to all.

Teaching, Learning, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI) and Sustainable Development (SD) on MA HRM

The academic staff teaching on MA HRM endeavour to ensure that the programme reflects their commitment to equality, diversity and inclusion to ensure that each student is able to make the most of their potential. This is evidenced through the inclusion of diverse reading and learning materials; the use of real-world examples; and the employment of academic staff and invited speakers from diverse backgrounds. Our assessments are designed to be accessible and authentic, making them achievable for students of all backgrounds, and are representative of requirements made by employers, in order to enhance the students' employability.

As well as running a module in the Social Sustainability and EDI on the MA HRM, we seek to treat equality, diversity and inclusion as integral to the content of all modules on the programme, whatever the topic. Within the School of Organisation, Economy and Society there is professional development for academic colleagues, on topics such as anti-racist approaches to Teaching and Learning; inclusive approaches to curriculum and learning design; and also, on decolonizing the library and research.

We actively promote the range of support available in terms of academic writing skills and workshops external to the curriculum. These workshops are intended to aid reflective and independent learning; they also enable those who are new to study or whose first language is not English to improve their written work, specifically in relation to assessment.

The University aims to create a welcoming space for all students. A disability learning support service gives advice to academic staff on supporting students through their studies, both in the classroom and in terms of assessed work.

Study Resources and EDI

Learning materials are uploaded on to Blackboard (our virtual learning environment) in advance of classes. Materials are modifiable in order that students can adjust the format to suit their particular needs.

Panopto and Blackboard Collaborate recordings of classes are widely available on MA HRM – this allows students to revise the concepts and review the material at their own pace, subsequent to the face-to-face sessions.

We are developing the use of a wider range of culturally inclusive materials where students can recognise their own identities.

Assessment methods

The overall aim of the assessment strategy within this course is to give students an opportunity to demonstrate that they have achieved the threshold learning outcomes stipulated for each module. The overall objective of a Master's Level HRM assessment is that students are required to:

- Demonstrate an ability to go beyond the mere exposition and reproduction of textbook facts, (and concepts, approaches, models and theories) and apply these to practical situations.
- Provide evidence in their work of both analytical and critical ability. That is, show an awareness of how HRM

practice is informed by theoretical presuppositions upon which analysis and critique can and should be exercised.

- Demonstrate an ability to conduct empirical and/or theoretical work in a specialist project area.

A variety of 'authentic' assessment tasks are set. These tasks are intended to reflect skills and /or knowledge needed in the workplace. There is no use of examinations as a method of assessment.

Assessments are designed to test the achievement of all learning outcomes in each module. Assessments only test the actual learning outcomes so if speed of response, for example, is not a learning outcome then it isn't tested. The weighting of each component varies from module to module.

In order to ensure that students are supported in this endeavour the following arrangements will be made:

- The majority of modules have two pieces of assessment. For every piece of assessment there is a formative element to ensure that students on the module are provided with the knowledge and skills development to enable them to carry out the assessment task set.

- Students are provided with the assessment briefing, the date of submission and the marking criteria in the first session of each module. This is to allow the students to plan their work and make the best use of their time to meet the module learning outcomes.

- A video briefing is provided for each piece of assessment on the module blackboard site.

- Each module aims to have an element of formative feedback so that students can assess their own progress and make any adjustments necessary in order to improve their overall performance. Where a module does not have formative assessment, there will be an opportunity during the module to get feedback on progress prior to submission of the assessment.

- For each piece of assessment there will be an opportunity for an academic support and feedback drop-in session where students receive support and feedback on their assessment prior to submission. Further details are provided in the module handbooks. There are also opportunities to receive academic support during lectures through allocated question and answer sessions and through the discussion board on the module blackboard site.

- Arrangements are also made for students who qualify to be given extra time to submit their assessed work. This would be either in the event of unavoidable occurrence, or where a student qualifies for reasonable adjustments to be made.

- While students are not discouraged from using AI, they are required to indicate what use has been made of these tools and to acknowledge this in a statement submitted on each piece of work.

- Any attempt to pass off as their own work, work that is AI generated or generated by a third party will automatically count as an assessment offence.

- Modules are assessed using various appropriate methods drawn from the following list:

  - Essay, case study analysis, or similar, word length typically 2,000 - 2,500 words.

  - Work-based report, critical evaluation of HRM policy or practice; word length typically in the range of 2,000 - 2,500 words.

  - Data response exercise 4000 words.

  - Skills development reflective report, 2,000 words.

  - Literature review; word length typically in the range 2,000 - 2,500.

  - Classroom presentation and report of same.

  - Research Project, 40-credit; word length typically in the range 8,500 - 10,000.

Qualifying Marks: CIPD criteria

On MA HRM, the CIPD requirements ask that for **core** modules that are mapped against the CIPD professional behaviour and knowledge map as part of the accreditation process, the module is only passed when a student achieves 50% or more in each coursework (so the qualifying mark is 50%). This relates to People Practice; Behaviour, Culture & Change; HRM Research Project; HRM and the Business Context; and Skills of the Manager/Consultant. Other (non-mapped) core and option modules on MA HRM follow the standard university regulations regarding weighted average module pass mark of 50% and no qualifying mark.

Graduate Attribute	Evident in Course Outcomes
Critical and creative thinker	001, 002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009
Literate and effective communicator	001, 002, 003, 005, 007, 008, 010
Entrepreneurial	007, 008, 009
Global in outlook and engaged in communities	002, 003, 005, 006, 007, 008, 009
Socially, ethically and environmentally aware	002, 003, 004, 005, 006, 008, 009, 010

Course Structure

This section shows the core and option modules available as part of the course and their credit value. Full-time Postgraduate students study 180 credits per year. Additional free text information on the choices may also be included, for example where students must choose one of two modules.. Course structures can be subject to change each academic year following feedback from a variety of sources.

Modules

Level 7

Module Code	Module Title	Status	PT Year (where applicable)	UK credit	ECTS
7HURM022W	Behaviour, Culture and Change	Core	1	20	10
7HURM006W	Human Resource Management and the Business Context	Core	1	20	10
7HURM021W	People Practice	Core	1	20	10
7HURM026W	Skills of the Manager/Consultant I	Core	1	10	5
7HURM027W	Skills of the Manager/Consultant II	Core	1	10	5
7HURM023W	HRM Research Project	Core	2	40	20
7LEAD004W	Designing and Delivering Training	Option	Various	20	10
7HURM003W	Employee Relations and Employee Engagement	Option	Various	20	10
7HURM004W	Employment Law for HR Practitioners in England and Wales	Option	Various	20	10
7HURM025W	HR Analytics	Option	Various	20	10
7HURM008W	International Human Resource Management	Option	Various	20	10
7LEAD008W	Learning and Development	Option	Various	20	10
7HURM018W	Reward Management	Option	Various	20	10
7HURM011W	Social Sustainability in Organisations	Option	Various	20	10
7HURM024W	Talent Management	Option	Various	20	10
7LEAD001W	The Psychology of Assessment and Selection	Option	Various	20	10

Please note: Not all option modules will necessarily be offered in any one year. In addition, timetabling and limited spaces may mean you cannot register for your first choice of option modules.

Professional body accreditation or other external references

Westminster Business School is an accredited Chartered Institute of Personal Development (CIPD) centre. The MA HRM course maps and aligns to the CIPD Profession Map core knowledge and core behaviour standards at Chartered level. Students who graduate with a Diploma will need to have passed all core modules in order to gain Associate level of CIPD membership. Both Masters and Diploma students have the eligibility to potentially upgrade their membership to Chartered Member depending on evidencing their experience via the CIPD upgrading process. There is no CIPD accreditation for a post-graduate certificate exit award. Westminster Business School will pay your CIPD joining fee and your initial membership fee.

Course management

Two Course Leaders (one for full-time students and the other for part-time students) both from within the School of Organisations, Economy and Society will manage the course which is part of a family of Human Resource Management Masters programmes offered by Westminster Business School. The School also offers a Master's degree course in International Human Resource Management.

Academic regulations

The current Handbook of Academic Regulations is available at westminster.ac.uk/academic-regulations.

Course specific regulations apply to some courses.

Academic Support

Upon arrival, an induction programme will introduce you to the staff responsible for the course, the campus on which you will be studying, the Library and IT facilities, additional support available and to your Campus Registry. You will be provided with the Course Handbook, which provides detailed information about the course. Each course has a course leader or Director of Studies. All students enrolled on a full-time course and part time students registered for more than 60 credits a year have a personal tutor, who provides advice and guidance on academic matters. The University uses a Virtual Learning Environment called Blackboard where students access their course materials, and can communicate and collaborate with staff and other students. Further information on Blackboard can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/current-students/studies/your-student-journey/when-you-arrive/blackboard

The Academic Learning Development Centre supports students in developing the skills required for higher education. As well as online resources in Blackboard, students have the opportunity to attend Study Skills workshops and one to one appointments. Further information on the Academic Learning Development Centre can be found at westminster.ac.uk/academic-learning-development.

Learning support includes four libraries, each holding a collection of resources related to the subjects taught at that site. Students1 can search the entire library collection online through the Library Search service to find and reserve printed books, and access electronic resources (databases, e-journals, e-books). Students can choose to study in the libraries, which have areas for silent and group study, desktop computers, laptops for loan, photocopying and printing services. They can also choose from several computer rooms at each campus where desktop computers are available with the general and specialist software that supports the courses taught in their College. Students can also securely connect their own laptops and mobile devices to the University wireless network.

Support Services

The University of Westminster Student and Academic Services department provide advice and guidance on accommodation, financial and legal matters, personal counselling, health and disability issues, careers, specialist advice for international students and the chaplaincy providing multi-faith guidance. Further information on the advice available to students can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/student-advice

The University of Westminster Students' Union also provides a range of facilities to support students during their time at the University. Further information on UWSU can be found at https://www.westminster.ac.uk/students-union

How do we ensure the quality of our courses and continuous improvement?

The course was initially approved by a University Validation Panel. University Panels normally include internal peers from the University, academic(s) from another university. a representative from industry and a Student Advisor.

The course is also monitored each year by the College to ensure it is running effectively and that issues which might affect the student experience have been appropriately addressed. Staff will consider evidence about the course, including the

evidence of student surveys, student progression and achievement and reports from external examiners, in order to evaluate the effectiveness of the course and make changes where necessary.

A Course revalidation takes place periodically to ensure that the curriculum is up-to-date and that the skills gained on the course continue to be relevant to employers. Students meet with revalidation panels to provide feedback on their experiences. Student feedback from previous years is also part of the evidence used to assess how the course has been running.

How do we act on student feedback?

Student feedback is important to the University and student views are taken seriously. Student feedback is gathered in a variety of ways.

- Through student engagement activities at Course/Module level, students have the opportunity to express their voice in the running of their course. Course representatives are elected to expressly represent the views of their peers. The University and the Students' Union work together to provide a full induction to the role of the course representatives.

- There are also School Representatives appointed jointly by the University and the Students' Union who meet with senior School staff to discuss wider issues affecting student experience across the School. Student representatives are also represented on key College and University committees.;

- All students are invited to complete a questionnaire before the end of each module. The feedback from this will inform the module leader on the effectiveness of the module and highlight areas that could be enhanced.

- Final year Undergraduate students will be asked to complete the National Student Survey which helps to inform the national university league tables.

This programme specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the course and the learning outcomes that a student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate, if they take full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. This specification is supplemented by the Course Handbook, Module proforma and Module Handbooks provided to students. Copyright in this document belongs to the University of Westminster. All rights are reserved. This document is for personal use only and may not be reproduced or used for any other purpose, either in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the University of Westminster. All copies of this document must incorporate this Copyright Notice – 2022©

Additional Details

Course specific regulation: students on CIPD accredited programmes must pass all required assessment(s) for the majority of core modules in order to pass the module: the qualifying mark for each piece of assessment in the majority of core modules on MA HRM therefore is 50%. Students who fail a module on the programme will not be awarded credit for that module by virtue of any 'compensation' for stronger performance in any other module(s).