

JOB PROFILE: HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER

WHAT DOES A HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER DO?

Human resources officers, also known as personnel officers, are responsible for developing policies and procedures relating to staff employed by organisations. They have a variety of different responsibilities depending upon the size and type of organisation they work for. These can include:

- Helping to draw up plans for the organisation's future personnel needs
- Recruiting people
- Providing staff training and development
- Operating pay and benefits policies
- Overseeing employee services like health and safety and sports and social facilities
- Counselling staff about problems at work and personal problems
- Advising management on matters like pay negotiations, disciplinary and grievance procedures, redundancy programmes, equal opportunities policy and employment law.

In very large organisations, human resources officers may specialise in one of these areas, but in smaller companies they may deal with all aspects of the job.

WHAT'S A WORKING WEEK LIKE?

Human resources officers work a standard 35-40 hour week, but may be required to work extra hours at busy times.

The work is mainly office-based although travel to other branches of the

organisation or to visit training providers may be necessary.

WHAT SKILLS WOULD I NEED TO BECOME A HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER?

To be a human resources officer you should:

- Enjoy working with people
- Be patient, tactful, diplomatic and approachable and able to deal with people who are stressed or upset
- Have good commercial awareness
- Be able to stay calm in difficult situations
- Have good spoken and written communication skills
- Be confident about gathering facts and statistics and making financial calculations for planning and other uses
- Respect the importance of confidentiality as you will be dealing with employees' personal details
- Have good organising skills to develop plans, policies and forecasts
- Have problem solving skills to deal with disputes, grievances and staffing problems
- Be able to work as part of a team
- Be able to work accurately with attention to detail
- Be able to use databases, spreadsheets, word processing and accounts packages

HOW DO I BECOME A HUMAN RESOURCES OFFICER?

There are no minimum entry requirements, and some enter via routine administrative or clerical jobs in personnel departments. These may require several

GCSEs (A-C)/S grades (1-3) or equivalent qualifications.

Most human resources officers enter with a higher national certificate or diploma (HNC/HND) or a degree. Entry requirements for a HNC/HND are four GCSEs (A-C)/S grades (1-3) with one A level/two Highers. A degree requires five GCSE's (A-C)/S grades (1-3) plus two A levels/three Highers. Equivalent qualifications may be accepted in either case.

An Access to Higher Education qualification may also be accepted for entry to certain courses. If experienced in a related field, you may be able to gain recognition of skills through Accredited Prior Learning (APL). Please check with colleges or universities for exact entry requirements.

There are some postgraduate personnel management courses. Entry requires a good first degree.

TRAINING FOR WORK

Most human resources officers are trained on-the-job, but many employers expect staff to work towards the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) qualifications listed below. Students can study part-time, full-time or via distance learning. Successful completion of a CIPD course brings membership of CIPD.

The Certificate in Personnel Practice (CPP) provides a practical grounding in basic personnel skills. There are no minimum entry qualifications.

The Certificate in Recruitment and Selection (CRS) gives specialist knowledge in this area.

The Professional Development Scheme (PDS) has four parts: core management, people management and development, specialist and generalist personnel and development and applied personnel and

development. Completing one module to Licentiate membership of CIPD; completion of all four modules to Graduate membership.

NVQs/SVQs are available at Level 3 in Personnel Support, at Level 4 in Personnel Management, and at Level 5 in Personnel Strategy. These are alternative qualifications for meeting some of the standards for membership of CIPD.

ONGOING DEVELOPMENT

All kinds of organisations employ human resources officers, including banks, local government, health services, airlines, hotels, retail organisations and manufacturing industries.

There is keen competition for vacancies, especially for inexperienced graduates. Gaining CIPD qualifications or NVQs/SVQs will help promotion prospects.

Some multinational companies offer the chance to work abroad. It is possible for experienced professionals to set up their own specialist consultancies offering services such as recruitment.

SALARIES

(Figures are intended as a guideline only)
Graduate entrants start at around £14,000 a year.

An experienced personnel manager earns anything between £25,000 and £40,000.

A human resources director could earn in the region of £55,000.

Salaries tend to be higher for CIPD members.

FURTHER INFORMATION

www.cipd.co.uk