



Unit 8: Human Resources

Delivery guidance

This unit comprises three distinct but related areas of the human resources (HR) function: its role in the planning process, its contribution to promoting workforce motivation, and the practical activities and processes involved in recruiting employees.

Your learners must be made aware of the specific areas of responsibilities of a human resources department. These can be classified as follows:

- personnel records
- recruitment
- workforce motivation
- workforce planning.

As with the other functional areas within a business – finance, production, marketing and the like – human resources is characterised by specialist functions and job roles. A business may employ a specialist Personnel Officer or Manager with overall responsibility for the operational workings of the department. Their role will involve keeping records of the personal details of employees as well as their attendance and punctuality records. The Personnel Officer or Manager may be supported by administrative staff responsible for specific aspects of the personnel function, such as maintaining databases and updating staff records. HR usually work closely with the payroll function in terms of pay rates, pay grades, wages and salaries.

Along with the recruitment function, these functions will be familiar to your learners. Indeed, if they have part-time employment to support their studies, they are likely to come into regular contact with staff working in human resources departments.

The aim of this unit is to extend your learners' understanding of the human resources function by exploring the contribution it makes to a business's strategic objectives and the overall performance of the business. In the same way, we can explore the effectiveness of the production function by considering measures such as productivity, so learners must be made aware of the ways in which the effectiveness of the human resources function can be measured.

By completing this unit, learners will be able to understand that an effective human resources function is central to business success, hence the focus of this unit on motivation and workforce planning.

From studying other units in this programme, your learners should be aware of the importance of management information in the decision-making process. Management information allows a business to make informed decisions and is central to the risk management process. Learners should become familiar with the management information that can be generated by the human resources function; for example, staff absenteeism rates, labour turnover, punctuality measures and average length of staff absenteeism. These measures will enable decision-makers in business to assess the effectiveness of their

workforce policies as well as the quality and effectiveness of their management team. Is a high rate of labour turnover, for example, the result of poor management practices resulting in poor motivation, or could it be because pay rates are not competitive? Why does a business find it difficult to fill specific vacancies? What measures can human resources managers suggest to address the situation? For example, are there more creative ways to recruit employees or should the focus be on providing upskilling opportunities for existing employees?

Aspects of this unit can be taught through practical activities. For example, learners could visit an organisation to learn how the recruitment process is carried out; it would be particularly useful to visit a large organisation with 250 or more staff. Learners should consider the recruitment process from job analysis through to selecting a suitable candidate. You should encourage learners to research and learn about the processes and procedures involved in recruitment and selection in different large businesses.

Learners should look at all the documentation which needs to be prepared within the HR function and understand the importance of compliance with the regulatory framework. You will need to create opportunities for learners to practise and develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills – this will help them to become effective participants in recruitment and selection interviews. Learners also need to be able to reflect on their performance to identify and plan development for future improvements.

Your learners will need access to recruitment and selection policies and practices in a range of businesses. Talks from human resource management practitioners can both develop understanding and support the knowledge and skill base established within the unit. Some learners may have part-time employment or informal workplace experiences which can be shared. It is important learners are aware of professional practices.

Approaching the unit

You can use a range of delivery methods in this unit, such as:

- discussions – class and small group discussions on the role of the HR function and the importance of successful recruitment
- individual or group presentations – covering recruitment and selection processes in a range of businesses, as well as how the HR function operates in order to ensure the success of an organisation
- case studies illustrating adherence to employment law.

Group work is an acceptable form of delivery, but you must ensure that each learner produces their own evidence containing sufficient detail for assessment.

You can involve local employers in the delivery of this unit by inviting them as:

- guest speakers
- members of the audience for learner presentations, where they can give feedback
- providers of work experience for learners, and of business materials as a basis for case studies and exemplars.



Delivering the learning aims

For learning aim A, learners should be introduced to the contribution made by human resources to the planning process. They should understand why the workforce is regarded as a resource (factor of production) and how this resource can be made more productive by upskilling and promoting motivation in the workplace. Some of the contemporary issues relating to workforce planning considerations should also be introduced; for example, the influence, tensions and challenges of globalisation in relation to the demand and supply of labour.


One of the most significant challenges facing many businesses operating in a competitive business environment is maintaining a workforce which is skilled, motivated and adaptable to changes in working conditions and practices. Learners need to be introduced to the techniques used by businesses to help their workforce adapt to changing market conditions. For example, the influence of technology on their job roles may require employees to learn new skills. Changes in management practices may require employees to take on new roles and responsibilities. Delaying and workforce restructuring can lead to opportunities as well as significant challenges for managers, staff teams and individuals. How these are implemented and managed will be key in determining the level of workforce motivation.

How changes to the working environment are implemented and managed is key to determining the level of workforce motivation, and forms the basis of learning aim B. Learners should be introduced to the concept of motivation by considering the factors that influence their own motivation; they could then classify these factors into financial and non-financial motivational factors. This could lead into a critical evaluation of the work of motivational theorists, and how the work of these theorists has influenced management practices in business.

Training and development are rightly considered a positive influence on motivation in the workplace. Learners should be introduced to the type of training and development opportunities offered in the workplace. They should also be made aware of the issues which may have to be addressed as a result of these training and development opportunities. For example, training can be either a direct or indirect cost, and it will involve opportunity costs. It may result in an increase in labour turnover as people leave for better-paid jobs. Training can also lead to dissatisfaction and demotivation if the newly acquired skills are not incorporated into job roles.

Measuring performance at all levels in a business ensures that remedial action can be taken to address weaknesses. The performance of individuals can be measured via a performance appraisal related to a person's job role. Learners should explore different types of appraisal systems and the role of target-setting in measuring performance over a specific period of time. Learners should be made aware that the most effective performance appraisal schemes are those which allow an honest appraisal of an individual's performance, backed by management support in those instances where an individual's performance has not met expectations. An employee might not meet expectations because of a lack of application on behalf of the individual, a lack of skills, poor management or unforeseen circumstances.

You could introduce learning aim C by getting learners to share their experiences of applying for jobs, whether through work experience or part-time employment. You could then give input on the function of recruitment and selection in a business. Ensure that learners understand that recruitment is not confined to external people joining the business



but also applies to those applying for a new role, or who are coming into a department or team to work on a short-term project.

It is important that learners understand the stages involved in the process, and how recruitment has to meet the needs of the business and also comply with current employment law and regulations. You could enlist the help of guest speakers who are human resource practitioners, to give examples of real situations. Case studies could also be used to highlight the implications of non-compliance with employment law.

You could give examples of all the relevant documentation involved – typically job descriptions, person specifications, advertisements, CVs, personal statements and letters of application – and discuss the benefits and limitations of each of these documents in the process.

You might also devise practical activities to enable learners to consider the selection techniques used in job applications and the interview process. Throughout this process, learners should pay special attention to ethical and legal considerations.



Assessment model

Learning aim	Key content areas	Recommended assessment approach
A Explore factors that can impact human resource planning in business	A1 Human resources (HR) A2 Human resource planning	Learners research and report on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • human resource planning and workforce motivation to improve business performance, for a given business scenario and the recruitment process in a large business.
B Examine methods of managing employee performance and how motivation impacts on business performance	B1 Motivation in the workplace B2 Training and development B3 Performance appraisal	
C Examine how effective recruitment and selection contribute to business success	C1 Recruitment of staff C2 Recruitment and selection processes C3 Ethical and legal considerations in the recruitment process	

Assessment guidance

This unit is assessed internally. The recommended assessment is through two internal assignments – one for learning aims A and B, and one for learning aim C.

An assignment is a distinct activity, completed independently by learners, that is separate from teaching, practice, exploration and other activities, and which learners complete with direction from tutors.

All learners must work independently and generate their own evidence towards the achievement of the learning aim(s), and this must be appropriately authenticated. The unit specification suggests a critical evaluation for learning aims A and B a report for learning aim C. Learners should ensure that all research is fully referenced with a bibliography.

Learning aims A and B require learners to prepare a critical evaluation of the importance of human resource management for business improvement. They should investigate theories and concepts of motivation, and ways employers can motivate staff to ensure business success.

For learning aim C, learners must report on the recruitment process in a large business of 250+ employees – for example, a retailer, manufacturing production company, financial business or leisure sector business. They should investigate the recruitment process and how it is linked to the success of a selected business. They should consider the problems that can impact on a business if there are staff shortages or if unsuitable employees are selected due to ineffective recruitment systems. The report should include recent and relevant ethical and legal considerations.



Getting started

This gives you a starting place for one way of delivering the unit, based around the recommended assessment approach in the specification.

Unit 8: Human Resources
<p>Introduction</p> <p>Begin by introducing the unit to learners through a group discussion, exploring the role of human resources in an organisation with which they may be familiar. You could then outline the learning aims of the unit.</p>
<p>Learning aim A – Explore factors that can impact human resource planning in business</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners should be given the opportunity to analyse HR data and draw conclusions regarding the current issues faced by specific businesses, and how they could be addressed.• Give a presentation on the ways in which different business organisations structure their human resources function.• Ask the learners to work in small groups to identify the responsibilities of specialist staff in the human resources department and discuss their findings with the class.• You should link this unit to other units on the programme. For example, learners may be familiar with the purpose of strategic planning from other units; they could use this knowledge to identify the specific objectives linked to the human resources function. Lead a class discussion and ask the learners to make a visual representation, for example a mind-map of all the objectives they can think of.• Ask learners to carry out individual research, using labour market statistics to identify trends in the local, regional and national economy that may impact on businesses in their own local area. They should think about how organisations forecast labour demand.• Give a presentation on the features and characteristics of human resource planning, including management actions to address human resource issues at an operational level.• Ask learners to work in pairs to research the nature of work in their locality, the type of workforce needed and contracts on offer, and share their findings with the class.• Ask learners to work in small groups to research the most common workplace issues and how they might be addressed, then make a presentation to the class.• Give a presentation on techniques to meet skills requirements.• Ask learners to work in small groups, using case study materials to identify how organisations deal with skill shortages at an operational level. Extend learning by asking learners to develop their own human resource strategy for a case study business to deal with skill shortages, and present their strategies to the class. Their peers could subject the strategy to a critical evaluation based on the long-term objectives of the business.• Give a presentation on induction and its purpose.• Using case study materials on an organisation, ask learners to plan an induction programme for new recruits. They should consider different ways of integrating new employees to a role, including internships, work experience, internal recruitment and secondments.

- Lead a class discussion about the importance of exit interviews as a method of reviewing the effectiveness of human resource practices.

Learning aim B – Examine methods of managing employee performance and how motivation impacts on business performance

- Start by giving a presentation on motivation in the workplace, including theories, the impact of motivation and reward systems.
- Ask learners to analyse influences on their own levels of motivation. They could, for example, consider what influences their levels of motivation when studying this particular unit.
- Ask learners who are employed in part-time jobs to speak to the class about what motivates them in the workplace and how they think that impacts on the business. Lead a class discussion on how reward systems include both financial and non-financial motivators.
- Extend learning by asking learners to write a short report analysing different motivational influences on employees working at different levels within a range of businesses. For example, is a manager motivated by different influences to an assistant? Is an employee of a charity motivated by different factors to a financier? How should the human resources function of an organisation reflect these differing motivational influences?
- Lead a class discussion that explores the challenges faced by managers and workplace supervisors who manage people who are motivated by a range of different influences. For example, how should a manager best manage a team made up of some people whose main motivation is financial and others who are motivated mainly by job satisfaction and personal development? You could ask a guest speaker from a local business to speak to the learners about these challenges.
- Extend learning by asking learners to create a management plan for motivating a team made up of people motivated by a range of different influences.
- Lead a discussion on the work of different motivational theorists (for example Maslow, Herzberg, Taylor, Mayo). What are the practical implications for a business and its managers who adhere to a particular motivational model?
- Extend learning by asking learners to write a critical assessment of the applicability of motivational theory in a workplace setting.
- Give a presentation on the purpose of training needs analysis and types of training.
- Using case study materials, lead a discussion on the different approaches to training and development in specific circumstances; for example, the introduction of technology into job roles, or the training required for individuals who are new to their job role following an organisational restructuring programme.
- Lead a discussion on the cost-benefit analysis approach to training and development, taking into account both the direct and indirect costs of training. Discuss the relevant quantitative performance indicators which can be used to measure the effectiveness of training and development on both individual and business performance. Measures might include quality of work, customer satisfaction and employee motivation.
- Extend learning by asking learners to individually research how different organisations approach training and development, and analyse their effectiveness. Learners present their findings to the class and the class could discuss which they think are the most and least effective training and development methods.

- Give a presentation on performance appraisal, including purpose, types of appraisal and impact on the individual and the business.
- Ask learners to work in small groups to research the different methods adopted by businesses to implement a performance appraisal scheme, and discuss the advantages and disadvantages of different appraisal schemes with the class. If possible, arrange for learners to visit a local business to learn about the appraisal scheme they use.
- Ensure that all learners are prepared before handing out the assignment brief for assessment for learning aims A and B.

Learning aim C – Examine how effective recruitment and selection contribute to business success

- Start by giving a presentation on the recruitment of staff. Lead a discussion on the importance for businesses of getting the right person for the job, and the main stages involved.
- Ask learners to work in small groups to explore why a business might need to recruit new staff and discuss their findings with the class. Learners should consider: business growth, changing job roles, systems changes, vacancies created by staff turnover, etc.
- Give a presentation on the recruitment and selection process.
- Ask learners to produce a flowchart showing the recruitment and selection stages for a specific large business of 250+ staff, and present this to the class (ensuring a range of different recruitment and selection processes are included). Case study materials could be used.
- Lead a group discussion on the cost effectiveness of different application approaches (for example paper-based, online, large group interview days) and together with the learners create a mind-map showing the advantages and disadvantages of different approaches.
- Give learners samples of documents used in the recruitment and selection process at a number of different organisations. Ask them to work in small groups to study the documents, then lead a class discussion on the purpose and construction of each.
- Ask learners to carry out individual research of job advertisements and consider the effectiveness of a range of adverts in attracting potential applicants. Learners could search the internet and obtain copies of job descriptions and person specifications for jobs for which they would be interested in applying.
- Ask learners to work in small groups to analyse two or three job advertisements. They should consider the good and bad points from each advert. Learners could follow this by preparing job advertisements for different posts from information given by job descriptions and person specifications. Case study materials could be used.
- Extend learning by asking learners to write a short report on the strategies/ actions that could be adopted by a business to improve the response rate to recruitment activities.
- Ask learners to work individually or in pairs to research the recruitment and selection process involved for two or three different types of job (for example marketing manager, team leader in a call centre or part-time retail assistant) and discuss their findings with the class.
- Give a presentation on ethical and legal considerations in the recruitment process. You could invite a human resource practitioner in as guest speaker to talk about ethics and employment law. It would be useful for them to use real examples, focusing on the importance of adhering to local employment legislation and ethical practices.

- Lead a class discussion on legal and social issues concerning race, gender, disability, religion, age and other situations where discrimination, either positive or negative, may occur.
- Extend learning by asking learners to create an informational leaflet on relevant local recruitment legislation and the problems associated with non-compliance.
- Create a quiz on ethics and employment law to check learners' awareness and sensitivity to both employee and employer standpoints.
- Ensure that all learners are prepared before handing out the assignment brief for assessment for learning aim C.



Details of links to other BTEC units and qualifications, and to other relevant units/qualifications

This unit links to Pearson BTEC L3 International Qualifications in Business and in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship:

- Unit 1: Exploring Business
- Unit 6: Principles of Management
- Unit 9: Team Building in Business
- Unit 21: Training and Development.

Resources

In addition to the resources listed below, publishers are likely to produce Pearson-endorsed textbooks that support this unit of the BTEC L3 International Qualifications in Business and in Enterprise and Entrepreneurship. Check the Pearson website <http://qualifications.pearson.com/endorsed-resources> for more information as titles achieve endorsement.

Textbooks

- Armstrong, M and Taylor, S – *Armstrong's Handbook of Human Resource Management Practice*, 15th edition (Kogan Page, 2020) ISBN 9780749498276.
A classic introductory text on all aspects of human resources. Suitable for higher-level learners.
- Leatherbarrow, C and Fletcher, J – *Introduction to Human Resource Management: A Guide to HR in Practice*, 4th edition (CIPD Kogan Page, 2018) ISBN 9780749483685.
Covers organisational culture, the role of the HR professional, HR planning, recruitment and selection, talent management, learning and development, motivation and performance, health and safety, diversity and equality, employment law, change management and handling and managing information. Suitable for higher-level learners.

Websites

- It will be useful for learners to look at the websites of a range of local and national businesses to research their recruitment and selection process.
- www.managementstudyguide.com – A complete tutorial resource for management learners
- www.businessballs.com – Contains a comprehensive set of resources focused upon leadership and management.
- www.cipd.co.uk – Chartered Institute of Personal Development has a series of useful factsheets on HR-related issues.

Videos

- YouTube has a number of videos on human resource practice and processes.

Pearson is not responsible for the content of any external internet sites. It is essential for tutors to preview each website before using it in class so as to ensure that the URL is still accurate, relevant and appropriate. We suggest that tutors bookmark useful websites and consider enabling students to access them through the school/college intranet.