CAREERS IN HUMAN RESOURCES

UPDATED 2014
NOTE: The following package is condensed from the various resources listed throughout this package. It should not be considered comprehensive or exhaustive.

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WHAT IS HUMAN RESOURCES (HR) AND WHAT TYPES OF CAREERS EXIST WITHIN IT?

Human Resources (HR) is defined as “employees, personnel, or the workforce of an organization. The term has become increasingly fashionable in recent years and expresses the view that employees are a resource that must be harnessed and managed effectively alongside the other resources used by business organizations, such as capital, property, raw materials, and energy”. ¹

HR consists of several functional units within which professionals can become Specialists or serve as Generalists, and perform duties related to all or combinations of all of these units, including:

**HR Planning:** The ongoing process of systematic planning to achieve optimum use of an organization's most valuable asset - its human resources. The objective of human resource (HR) planning is to ensure the best fit between employees and jobs, while avoiding manpower shortages or surpluses. The three key elements of the HR planning process are forecasting labour demand, analyzing present labour supply, and balancing projected labour demand and supply. ²

**Training & Development:** Activities include the determination, design, execution, and analysis of educational programs. Orientation programs, for example, are usually necessary to get new hires acclimated to the company. The HRM training and education role may encompass a wide variety of tasks, depending on the type and extent of different programs. In any case, the HR Professional ideally is aware of the fundamentals of learning and motivation, and must carefully design effective training and development programs that benefit the overall organization as well as the individual. Training initiatives may include apprenticeship, internship, job rotation, mentoring, and new skills programs. ³

**Staffing:** The recruitment process begins by defining the job, seeking a pool of qualified individuals, selecting the best individual for the position and finally orienting the individual to the position and to the organization (if the individual is hired from outside the organization). The Staffing function also encompasses activities related to recruiting workers, such as designing

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¹ Oxford Reference Online: A Dictionary of Human Resource Management
evaluation tests and interview methods. Ideally, the chief goal is to hire the most-qualified candidates without encroaching on any laws or using any unfair practices.  

**Job Design:** Job design is the process of arranging or rearranging work, aimed at reducing or overcoming job dissatisfaction and employee alienation arising from repetitive and mechanistic tasks. Through job design, organizations try to raise productivity levels by offering non-monetary rewards such as greater satisfaction from a sense of personal achievement in meeting the increased challenge and responsibility of one's work. Organizations also must plan for new jobs and periodically consider whether they should revise existing jobs. When an organization is expanding, supervisors and human resources professionals must help plan for new or growing work units. When an organization is trying to improve quality or efficiency, a review of work units and processes may require a fresh look at how jobs are designed.

**Performance Management:** The fundamental goal of performance management is to promote and improve employee effectiveness. It is a continuous process where managers and employees work together to plan, monitor and review an employee's work objectives or goals and his or her overall contribution to the organization. HR Professionals design and develop the programs and tools to help managers and employees establish performance standards, identify ways to improve performance, and assess and document work performance.

**Compensation & Benefits:** Establish policies and develop programs to fairly compensate employees for their work while meeting the strategic objectives of the organization. Compensation includes direct (wages, salaries, incentives, bonuses, and commissions) and indirect (benefits provided to improve the employees’ quality of life).

**Employee & Labour Relations:** Design and develop HR policies and practices to maintain harmonious working relationships between departments/managers and individuals (includes employee communications, managing organization change, absenteeism, sexual harassment, employment equity, diversity). In a unionized workplace, develop and maintain effective working relationships with representative unions, participate in collective bargaining, provide advice and guidance on grievance procedures and policy interpretation. Manage workforce reductions.

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5 [http://www.whatishumanresource.com/job-design](http://www.whatishumanresource.com/job-design)
6 hrcouncil.ca
7 hrcouncil.ca
8 cchra.ca
**Workplace Health & Safety:** Design and develop policies, practices and procedures that provide a hazard-free workplace and comply with all applicable government statutes and regulations; inform employees about health and safety, enforce safety rules, and keep comprehensive company records.  

**HR Information Management:** Design and maintain computerized system that provides current and accurate data for the purposes of control and decision making; in addition to storing and retrieving HR Information, data is used to produce reports, forecast HR needs, establish strategic plans, plan careers and promotions, and evaluate HR policies and practices.

**Common occupational titles for HR professionals include the following:**

*more information on titles marked with an asterisk can be found in Career Cruising – available through the Career Learning Network (CLN).*

- Human Resources Assistant
- Human Resources Specialist*
- Human Resources Coordinator
- Human Resources Business Partner
- Human Resources Analyst
- Corporate Trainer*
- Labour Policy Analyst
- Employee/Labour Relations Advisor
- Compensation Analyst
- Employee Benefits Manager
- Human Resources Administrator
- Human Resources Manager
- HRIS Specialist
- Human Resources Director
- Vice President of Human Resources
- Recruiter*
- Labour Relations Manager
- Compensation Manager
- Payroll Administrator
- Manager, Wellness & Occupational Health

*(Sources hrjobs.ca, hrsdc.ca, Career Cruising)*
SECTION 2

WHAT SKILLS AND QUALITIES ARE ESSENTIAL IN HR CAREERS?

Technical Skills: Knowledge of HR practices; understanding of operations/business principles, budgeting, and planning (knowledge of Accounting and Finance an asset), computer literacy.

Transferrable Skills: Oral and written communications; interpersonal (listen, motivate, influence, persuade others); presentation/facilitation; analytical; problem solving; decision-making; organizational; time management; leadership, teamwork.

Qualities: Strategic and proactive mindset; ability to handle pressure; attention to details, empathetic, understanding of human nature.

(Source: Former UTM Career Centre Job Coach Lynn Sharer)

According to careersinbusiness.com Nine Key HR Skills include:

1. Organization
2. Multitasking
3. Discretion and Business Ethics
4. Dual Focus (balance the needs of employees with those of the company)
5. Ability to gain and maintain employee trust
6. Fairness
7. Dedication to Improvement
8. Strategic Orientation
9. Team Orientation

HR professionals deal with sensitive information concerning compensation, employee performance and productivity, problems at work etc., so integrity and extreme discretion are absolutely mandatory.
WHERE ARE HR RELATED PROGRAMS OFFERED FOR FURTHER EDUCATION IN ONTARIO?

Pursuing an undergraduate degree in HR or a related program can prepare students early for a career in the field. However this is not the only way. Many HR professionals come from very diverse and broad educational backgrounds or a combination of high school education and many years of work experience in HR. Further education is definitely advantageous for career advancement, especially into managerial, supervisory and senior level positions.

Post-Graduate Programs at Ontario Colleges

For those who already hold an undergraduate degree, pursuing a post-graduate certificate in Human Resources Management at a community college has become a popular option. The courses offered are generally approved by the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) and meet the requirements for writing the National Knowledge Exam (NKE) which is the first stage in the certification process for becoming a Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP). Many of the programs offered have the option of a co-op placement or field practicum, which are great ways to gain hands on experience, while learning the theoretical background.

Below are examples of related programs offered in Ontario:

**Sheridan College** (GTA) **co-op option, courses can also be taken part-time or online.**

**Humber College** (GTA) **field placement, courses can also be taken part-time or online.**

**Seneca College** (GTA) **co-op option, courses can also be taken part-time or online.**

For more information on other colleges that offer the Human Resources Management post grad program, visit [www.ontariocolleges.ca](http://www.ontariocolleges.ca)
Master’s and PhD level Programs at Ontario Universities

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO:

• Master of Industrial Relations and Human Resources (MIRHR) or PhD;
• Master of Business Administration (MBA): Major in Human Resources Management;
• PhD: Organizational Behaviour and Human Resources Management.

YORK UNIVERSITY:

• Master of Human Resources Management (MHRM)
• PhD in Human Resources Management

McMASTER UNIVERSITY:

• Master of Business Administration (MBA) with concentration in Human Resources and Labour Relations;
• PhD in Business Administration with concentration in Human Resources and Labour Relations;
• Master of Work and Society.

For more information on other universities that offer Master’s and PhD level programs visit www.aucc.ca
SECTION 4

PROFESSIONAL DESIGNATION

In 2003 the Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations (CCHRA) officially introduced the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation as a national standard to define the work performed by HR practitioners in Canada and assess the qualification of candidates. In Ontario, the Human Resources Professionals Association (HRPA) is the issuing body of the designation. To earn the CHRP designation, you must meet the following requirements:

1. **Association Membership Requirement**

   To obtain and maintain the Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) designation, you must be a member in good standing with your provincial HR association.

2. **Coursework Requirement**

   The coursework requirement consists of successful completion of nine courses:
   
   - Human Resources Management (HRM)
   - Finance and Accounting
   - Occupational Health and Safety
   - Labour Relations
   - Compensation
   - Organizational Behaviour
   - Human Resources Planning
   - Training and Development
   - Recruitment and Selection

3. **National Knowledge Exam Requirement**

   The National Knowledge Exam® (NKE) assesses your understanding of HR knowledge and skills. After you have passed the exam, you are considered a candidate for certification.

4. **Degree Requirement**

   You must hold a minimum of a bachelor’s degree from an accredited college or university. The degree does not have to be in Human Resources.
5. **Experience Requirement**

Submit a completed experience assessment which is validated by your current employer. This assessment must prove:

- A minimum of three years working in an HR role within the last ten years.
- Experience gained at the professional level and a level of autonomy in the application of your HR knowledge. It is not necessary to be a manager or supervisor.
- Experience covers at least two of the seven Required Professional Capabilities.

To maintain a current designation, you will need to retain your membership with your provincial association and recertify your CHRP every three years.

*According to a 2013 PayScale Research Report, CHRPs earn more and get promoted faster than non-designated HR professionals.*

**Median Salary by Job - Certification: Certified Human Resources Professional (CHRP) (Canada)**

*PayScale* © PayScale, Inc. @ www.payscale.com

***Please note that the certification framework will be changing in January 2016. Certification will take place at three levels, Entry, Professional and Executive. For detailed information on the CHRP certification process in Ontario, visit [http://www.hrpa.ca](http://www.hrpa.ca). For Canada-wide information visit [http://www.cchra.ca](http://www.cchra.ca)
SECTION 5

BUILDING RELEVANT EXPERIENCE AND FINDING WORK

In addition to the theoretical knowledge, students are encouraged to acquire relevant experience. This can be done through volunteer, part-time, summer or internship positions in HR or a field that has HR related aspects to it. In doing so, students get the opportunity to develop the transferable skills essential for HR Careers. These kinds of positions are a good way to explore the different areas and degrees of specialization within HR, gain insight into what kind of organization or setting you would like to work in, and build your network of people in the field who can serve as great sources in your career planning and job search by sharing an insider view of the field with you.

While approximately 20% of all available jobs at any given time are advertised in some way, 80% of jobs are not posted and remain invisible to the general public. It is therefore essential to use multiple job search strategies and allocate more time to getting into the hidden job market through pro-active search strategies, while still spending some time on more passive methods.

❖ PRO-ACTIVE METHODS

A proactive job search takes considerably more time and effort. To get into the hidden job market, more initiative is required on your part because there isn’t a clear job posting or resource to start with. Students who remain persistent and motivated definitely have the competitive edge over all those competing for the same 20% of posted positions. This method also gives you greater opportunity to find jobs more tailored to your goals. Below are some suggestions for your proactive job search:

✔ Networking: Use your existing network of people effectively (family, friends, professors, TAs, previous employers, members of affiliation groups etc.) and let them know about your career interests and goals. Mention that you are looking for a volunteer, part-time, full-time, summer job, or internship in HR or a related field. Even if they do not have a position to offer, they can refer you to someone they know who might. Be specific in terms of what type of position and the work setting you are looking for and know what you have to offer in terms of your own skills and qualities.

✔ Join a Professional Association: Many associations such as the HRPA offer student memberships. This can help with building a network and gaining access to information and...
career development opportunities (i.e. participation at conferences, access to resources/articles, job postings, volunteer opportunities, workshops, awards, and many more).

✓ **Use Career Centre Resources:** Participating in our events and services such as Networking Events, Fairs, Employment Advising, Workshops etc., and using our resources such as Employer Directories, Vault Career and Industry Guides, Resume and Cover Letter Toolkit etc. can be very helpful in getting more leads in building your experience and organizing your active job-search. Please see the section “Where Can Students Obtain More Information on HR Careers” for more detailed information on Career Centre Resources.

❖ **PASSIVE METHODS**

Passive methods include looking at job postings from various sources (newspaper, electronic postings on company web-sites, electronic job-banks, employment agencies etc.) and applying to these. Passive in this context does not mean that less effort is spent on this; rather there is less initiative required on your part, since there are specific resources and clear job descriptions to work with.
HR professionals agree that there are some major trends current and anticipated that affect or will affect their roles as HR practitioners. These include:

- **Dramatic Increase in Workforce Diversity**

  Canada has a reputation for embracing people of varied ethnicity, religion, culture, language and beliefs. However, our multicultural mix does not make us immune to the challenges of managing a diverse workforce. Diversity is a business strategy. Ultimately, the success of a diversity strategy is measured in how well we capitalize on the skills, intelligence, culture and experience of every employee.

- **Baby Boomer Angst**

  Organizations will be hurt when the older generationretires and takes its knowledge with it. The Conference Board of Canada predicts a shortage of 1 million skilled workers by 2020. To counter this, many organizations now have mentoring programs to help with technology skills from the younger generation and knowledge transfer from the older generation. HR professionals will need to figure out what jobs will exist in the future, who will have the skills to meet those needs, and how to fill any gaps that exist.

- **Impact of Technology**

  Eventually, technology is going to eliminate many HR jobs as they exist today, which is why so many HR positions have become more strategic rather than transactional. Technology has allowed for more self-service, anytime-anywhere communications capabilities. This coupled with the rising trend of outsourcing (such as payroll to companies like ADP) guarantees there will be fewer HR people in corporations. This is a cost and time saving benefit to organizations and it frees the HR professionals to focus on more strategic issues. More importantly, the use of technology is a fundamental expectation of Gen Y’s and Gen X’s.
- Impact of Legal and Compliance Issues

In addition to keeping abreast of all relevant legislation affecting their organizations, such as Labour Laws, HR Practitioners now have to deal with the legislative and regulatory requirements surrounding data privacy and security. Privacy laws are in the process of changing the way in which the HR department interacts with employees. This may include the need for creation of employee privacy policies, putting in place more stringent rules on HR data and the accessing of that data, restrictions on employee references and background checks, implementation of data retention and destruction policies and employee access to their own data. HR Practitioners now have added responsibilities around Risk Management.

Sources:

careers-in-business.com/hrfacts.htm

SECTION 7

WHAT IS THE FUTURE/LABOUR MARKET OUTLOOK FOR HR?

Ontario Job Futures rates the current (2013-2017) employment prospects for Human Resources Managers as “Above Average”. “Above Average" labour market conditions usually mean that, relative to the employment situation overall, there is a better likelihood of finding stable work in this occupation, and employment prospects are attractive or improving.

General Makeup of the workforce for this occupation (2011):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>General Employment Characteristics</th>
<th>(%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-Time</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part-Time</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Employed</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employees</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment Rate</td>
<td>3.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How do wages for this occupation compare with others?

Figure 3: Average Annual Employment Income, Employed Full-Time Full-Year in 2010, Ontario

Source: Statistics Canada, National Household Survey
SECTION 8

WHERE CAN STUDENTS OBTAIN MORE INFORMATION ON HR CAREERS?

UTM CAREER CENTRE RESOURCES

(Career Centre Hours Mon-Fri 10 am to 4 p.m. (closed for lunch from 12-1 on Fridays))

❖ ELECTRONIC RESOURCES

Career Centre website:  www.utm.utoronto.ca/careers

Visit this site often to get up to date information on the services and events that are offered. The Explore Careers link offers useful tools in your career exploration process including the Alumni Profiles section. Current Alumni Profiles include HR Consultant, Human Resources Associate and Human Resources Officer. The Find Employment section offers helpful leads for your job search.

Career Cruising:  Come to the Career Centre and ask how you can access this program or access it through the Resources section of your Career Learning Network (CLN) account at https://cln.utoronto.ca.  It is an interactive electronic Canadian career guide that can be used to explore different occupations (such as HR Specialist, Management Consultant, Corporate Trainer, Industrial-Organization Psychologist, Recruiter and many more).  Learn about job duties, work conditions, education requirements, salary ranges and more.

Directory of Careers & Employment in Canada:  Come to the Career Centre and ask how you can access this database or access it through the Resources section of your Career Learning Network (CLN) account at https://cln.utoronto.ca.  Directories can be helpful in researching different companies by providing company profiles and an index of these by areas of study, industry or geographical location.  One could for instance find out if a company has an HR department or hires for HR positions, and also obtain the correct contact information to inquire about employment.  Note:  There are also printed versions of career directories available for use in the Career Centre.

Job Postings:  Through your CLN account, you will have access to current Part Time, Volunteer and Summer Job Postings, on and off campus.  Students in their 4th year or who have graduated within the last 2 years and have attended the Now That I’m Graduating What’s Next? orientation session will have access to Full Time Job postings.  Work Study positions are also available in May for the upcoming Summer and in September for the Fall/Winter terms.  It can be helpful to look at delisted job postings which are expired to research the types of positions available.
or organizations that have had suitable openings and to see what kinds of skills and requirements they were looking for. Please note that the delisted positions are only viewable on the computers in the Career Centre. Examples of jobs recently posted in CLN include:

Job Posting 44355 – **Full Time Permanent, Junior Recruiter** - Aaron Consulting Inc.
Job Posting 42265 – **Full Time Permanent, HR Manager** – ULINE
Job Posting 44659 – **Full Time Permanent, HR Coordinator** – WHEELS GROUP
Job Posting 41630 – **Work Study, HR Assistant** – U of T Faculty of Dentistry
Job Posting 43272 – **Part Time, Blogger/Writer HR** – WORKHOPPERS.COM
Job Posting 45822 – **Human Resources Intern** – KIEWIT

**Online Resume & Cover Letter Toolkit:** This is an online, step by step guide to help in creating an effective resume and cover letter. It also includes tips for electronic resumes and CV’s as well as samples of discipline specific resumes and cover letters (e.g. Management, Humanities).

**Information Interview Database:** The Informational Interview Database is part of the Career Centre’s career exploration programming. You will have the opportunity to learn directly from a professional working in a career area of interest who can help answer career related questions. By participating in informational interviews, you will be able to investigate the skills, education requirements, work environment, and lifestyle that accompany a career. Come to the Career Centre and ask how you can access this program or access it through the Programs section of your Career Learning Network (CLN) account at [https://cln.utoronto.ca](https://cln.utoronto.ca).

❖ **PRINT RESOURCES**

**NOC Binders:** The binders in the Career Centre Resource library include occupational profiles, education information, professional associations, sample job postings, and articles. HR Careers can be found under NOC112.

**Alumni Binder:** Looking at profiles of Alumni can give you a sense of what concrete paths people have taken in the past to enter the HR field. Current profiles include those of an HR Consultant and an HR & Training Officer.

**Vault Guide to Human Resources Careers:** This guide will show you what HR is, help you to determine where you might fit in the profession and how to get a job in HR. Note: The Vault can also be accessed through the Resources link in CLN at [https://cln.utoronto.ca](https://cln.utoronto.ca).
SERVICES AND EVENTS

Extern Job Shadowing Program: This is a unique career exploration program, offering current students the opportunity to investigate their career interests in an actual workplace over a 1 to 5 day voluntary placement in November, February and/or June. See our web site for the application process. In the past, students have been placed with an HR Administrator, Mediator, HR Generalist, Labour Relations Officer, HR Consultant, and HR Manager.

Workshops: Small group workshops help you begin your career planning and sharpen your work search skills. Workshops include Resume and Cover Letter, Effective Interviews, Summer Job Search and Now That I’m Graduating What’s Next? To see the schedule of upcoming workshops please visit the Career Centre website’s Events Calendar or check the Events Calendar and sign up for a session in CLN at https://cln.utoronto.ca.

Resume/Cover Letter Critiques: Individual 30 minute appointments are available at the Career Centre during which you can sit down with one of our staff and get feedback on your resume or cover letter. Online same-day sign-up is available on critique days. To see what days critiques are being offered and for information on how to sign up please visit the Career Centre web site’s Events Calendar or the Mississauga Critique Calendar in CLN at https://cln.utoronto.ca.

Career Counselling: If you are unsure about your career direction or how your academic major relates to work after graduation, you may find it helpful to make an individual appointment with one of our professional Career Counsellors.

Employment Advising: Our Employment Advisors can help you develop a customized, step by step job search plan, including developing strong resumes, cover letters and LinkedIn profiles, learning how to network effectively, preparing for interviews, how to gain the experience you need and how to find unadvertised jobs.

Fairs: Come to our fairs and speak directly to representatives of various organizations that are looking for potential candidates. Please visit our website or the Events Calendar in CLN for dates, times, locations and a list of participating organizations. Typically the Get Experience Fair is held in September and the Get Hired Fair is held in January. Similar to our fairs, Career Information Days are held over 2-4 days in mid to late September at the St. George Campus with representatives from over 100 organizations.

Employer Information Sessions: Meet recruiting representatives from organizations that are hiring. These sessions are ongoing throughout the year. Please visit our website or the Events Calendar in CLN for dates, times, locations and participating employers.
**Careers in HR Panel**: A panel of representatives from diverse HR backgrounds discusses careers in HR as well as current hiring practices. This event is typically takes place once per year in the Winter Term. Please visit our website or the Events Calendar in CLN for date, time, location and participating panelists.

**USEFUL WEB LINKS**

- [www.hrpa.ca](http://www.hrpa.ca) – Human Resources Professionals Association
- [www.cchra](http://www.cchra) – Canadian Council of Human Resources Associations
- [www.hrjob.ca](http://www.hrjob.ca) – Jobs, Articles, Career Section, HR News & Trends
- [http://www.hireauthoritycanada.com](http://www.hireauthoritycanada.com) – Job Board for HRPA members
- [http://www.hrpa.ca/Pages/HRPA-Edge-For-Employers.aspx](http://www.hrpa.ca/Pages/HRPA-Edge-For-Employers.aspx) – HRPA Edge - HRPA’s HR Internship Program featuring short term, paid internships.
- [http://www.payroll.ca](http://www.payroll.ca) – The Canadian Payroll Association
- [https://cstd.site-ym.com](https://cstd.site-ym.com) – The Canadian Society for Training & Development
- [http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmarket/ojf/pdf/0112_e.pdf](http://www.tcu.gov.on.ca/eng/labourmarket/ojf/pdf/0112_e.pdf) – Ontario Job Futures Labour Market Outlook
- [www.payscale.com](http://www.payscale.com) – Detailed Salary Information for various jobs
- [www.onetonline.org](http://www.onetonline.org) – Detailed descriptions of occupations as well as Labour Market Outlook Information (American)