

MODULE 1

Introduction to Human Resources

Week 1 · 4 lessons · ~40 min

Lessons in this module:

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LESSON 1.1

What is Human Resources?

Human Resources (HR) is the function within an organization responsible for managing its most valuable asset - its people. HR bridges the gap between the organization's goals and the needs of its employees.

HR covers a wide range of responsibilities:

- Attracting talent - finding and hiring the right people
- Developing people - training, learning, and career growth
- Retaining employees - keeping good people engaged and motivated
- Ensuring compliance - following employment laws and regulations
- Supporting culture - building a positive workplace environment

REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE

A retail company hires 50 new staff for the holiday season. HR manages job postings, interviews, contracts, onboarding training, and payroll setup - all before the first day of work.

KNOWLEDGE CHECK

Which of the following is **NOT** a core function of Human Resources?

- A) Managing recruitment and hiring
- B) Developing employee training programs
- C) Setting the company's product pricing strategy
- D) Ensuring compliance with employment laws

✓ **Answer: C - Setting product pricing is a Finance or Marketing function. HR focuses on people management.**

LESSON 1.2

The Strategic Role of HR

Modern HR is not just administrative - it is a strategic partner to the business. Strategic HR aligns people practices with the organization's long-term goals.

Operational HR vs Strategic HR:

Operational HR	Strategic HR
Processing payroll	Workforce planning for future growth
Posting job adverts	Building an employer brand to attract talent
Handling disciplinarys	Designing culture and engagement programs
Managing leave requests	Succession planning for key roles

Key insight: As you grow in HR, you will move from operational tasks to strategic thinking. Both are essential - but understanding the strategic level is what separates a good HR professional from a great one.

LESSON 1.3

The HR Department Structure

HR departments vary by organization size, but most include specialist functions that work together to support the business.

Common HR roles and functions:

- HR Director / CHRO - leads the HR function at executive level
- HR Business Partner (HRBP) - works embedded with specific departments to align HR with business needs
- Talent Acquisition / Recruitment - responsible for finding and hiring candidates
- Learning & Development (L&D) - manages training and career development
- Compensation & Benefits - manages pay structures, bonuses, and benefits packages
- Employee Relations - handles grievances, disciplinaries, and workplace conflicts
- HR Operations / Admin - manages systems, data, contracts, and compliance

As someone new to HR, you will likely start in HR Operations or as a generalist, handling a mix of tasks across all functions. This is the best place to learn the full picture.

LESSON 1.4

Key HR Frameworks and Models

HR professionals use established frameworks to guide their work. These models provide structure and a common language across organizations.

The Employee Lifecycle: The journey an employee takes from their first contact with an organization to their departure.

1. Attract - employer branding, job adverts, social media
2. Recruit - sourcing, screening, interviewing, selecting
3. Onboard - induction, orientation, early engagement
4. Develop - training, performance management, career growth
5. Retain - engagement, culture, recognition, benefits
6. Offboard - resignation, exit interview, knowledge transfer

Remember: HR's job does not end when someone is hired - it continues throughout the entire employee lifecycle. Each stage requires different HR skills and processes.