



The College for
Adult Learning

DO YOU WANT A CAREER IN HR?

If you are thinking about a career in HR and want to know more about it, then this report will explain what it is, what the career and earning potential is here in Australia and globally as well as tell you a bit more about the career structure and the skills you'll need to be successfully in
Human Resources

*Are you thinking
about doing the
Certificate IV in
Human Resources?*



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Are you Thinking of a Career in HR?

There's little doubt that the HR profession is the one to be in – in the 21st century world of work both here in Australia and globally. It seems HR is the profession on the go and, in demand!

To illustrate this point I searched seek.com.au today and found that there are nearly 10,000 HR jobs advertised around Australia right now.¹ Just as a matter of interest, this is up by two thirds on a similar search I conducted in July 2012. A brief review of the salaries advertised ranged from \$64,800 for an HR Coordinator in a local govt. environment or \$84k for an HR Officer. HR Managers ranged in salary from \$120 - \$180k with HR directors and other specialised positions from \$220k+.

While my search has been brief and very rudimentary it serves to show you just how many jobs there are in HR at any given time in Australian workplaces. In support of this, the statistics from the Aust. government's job outlook website² shows that employment for Human Resource Professionals to 2016-17 is expected to **grow very strongly**. It also showed that employment rose strongly in the past five years and in the long-term (ten years).

If we look at HR jobs globally, well the CNN Money website ranks the HR manager as fourth in its list of best jobs in the United States, based on the high level of flexibility and creativity, and manageable levels of difficulty and stress. It's an important and growing field and, the US Bureau of Labour Statistics predicts a significantly higher-than-average growth rate for HR jobs in the entry and specialist levels between 2010 and 2020.

The United Kingdom's official graduate careers website says that opportunities to work in the fast-paced recruitment and HR industries exist all over the UK.

So, HR is the career to be in for solid job growth, higher than average salaries and career opportunities globally but, just what is HR and what sort of work do you do in HR?

Why Organisations Need HR

The HR role has changed considerably over the last decade or so. The HR role used to be all about Personnel so organising the weekly pay run, scheduling and keeping a record of sick leave taken, annual leave accrued and taken and dealing with employee questions about their employment and conditions and so on. It was far more of an administrative role than it is nowadays.

These days, the HR function exists as a partner to the rest of the organisation to support the achievement of business strategy.

Therefore HR Business Partners need to have strong business acumen and an interest in business performance (profits, growth, sustainability etc.). It is also much more strategic in its outlook.

¹ www.seek.com.au HR jobs searched 18/10/13

² www.joboutlook.gov.au

With organisations becoming increasingly aware of the need to attract and retain the best people for their workforce, along with the somewhat complex nature of employee welfare and employment law, employers are constantly seeking skilled additions to their HR team.

Reasons Why Informed People Select a Career in HR

Some of the major reasons why people choose a career in HR include:

- ❖ The opportunity to influence innumerable aspects of the organisation,
- ❖ To assist in the development of its employees, and
- ❖ To play a part in influencing strategic business decisions.

A business is only as good as its employees, and an organisation's employees are only as good as their HR team.

This focus on employee engagement is becoming far more urgent and (for many organisations) critical to their very business survival as, for many organisations in Australia today, their employees are, in fact, their only true competitive advantage.

With more and more businesses running on a global platform where jobs and functions can be outsourced anywhere in the world and technology plays a bigger and bigger role, the mix of employees an organisation has can make or break them.

This means that the role of the Human Resources Management has also become much more important and essential to business survival and growth as it is the HR Professional who has the skills needed to attract and retain the most talented employees who will, in turn have a direct impact on the organisation's growth and future success.

While there are many more specialist roles in HR, including employer branding, HR business partner or strategic HRM and change management, most generalist HR positions will require you to get involved in multiple functions such as recruitment and selection, training and development, employee relations, contracts of employment, complaints and grievances, employee rights, appraisals, and health and safety.

HR Jobs

A career in HR brings with it multiple opportunities for variety and career progression.

At one end of the scale are HR Assistants or administrators and at the other end of the scale sits the HR Director, with a number of varying roles in between.

Here are a few examples of jobs from across the HR spectrum:

HR Assistant or HR Administrator

This is an entry level position acting as the first point of contact for all HR-related queries and handling all personnel-related paperwork and documentation, such as employment contracts.

HR Officer

This role generally has responsibilities in recruitment, payroll, training, induction, sickness and absence tracking, disciplinary and grievance procedures, redundancy settlements, equal opportunities and establishing staff support systems.

Recruitment Coordinator

This role arranges the advertisement of new vacancies, analyses applications and shortlists candidates, arranges job interviews, and manages any testing procedures involved in the recruitment process.

Training Officer

This role identifies the training requirements among employees within the organisation and designs and implements appropriate training programs for individuals or groups.

HR Manager

This is usually a more strategic role involving a range of policies, processes and practices relating to the overall business needs of the organisation. This role contributes to and/or is a party to the business or strategic planning processes of the organisation and often produces the HR Plan in support of the organisation's strategic plan. The HR Manager is usually involved with overseeing others in the HR team and the delivery of their responsibilities in addition to employee welfare, salary reviews, and employment law.

HR Director

The HR Director is a member of the organisation's executive management team and so has a hands on role developing strategy and future directions of the company. Specially the director will manage and control the departmental expenditure within agreed budgets as well as maintain awareness of contemporary HR development theory and methods and ensure that the organisation implements new techniques and processes to maintain its competitive edge. These days the HR Director is very focused on business and HR related metrics aimed at increasing productivity, innovation and employee engagement.

The HR Profession Map

Finding a way through the profession has become easier with the CIPD's³ HR Profession Map. This is available to view online and can be developed in detail as a personalised tool. It illustrates what HR people do and deliver across every aspect and specialism of the profession and looks at the underpinning skills, behaviour and knowledge that they need to be successful.

It is interesting to note that, according to the Australian Government website, HR Professionals have a high proportion of full-time jobs in the Australian jobs market at 87.7% and, their average weekly hours are below the national average at 40.2 (compared to 41.3 for all occupations) and with earnings above the national average.⁴

Skill Sets required to be an HR Professional

Many people think that, if you love working with people and find satisfaction in helping others, then the human resources field would be an ideal fit for them. While this is true as, you need to genuinely care about the well-being and development of your employers employees, which often results in close working relationships with people from across the business, it is not enough in and of itself. There are quite a few hands on skills required to do well in the job.

In order to start a career in HR, you will also need to show first class communication and interpersonal skills as the majority of the role will be people orientated. This means that you will deal with people at all levels within an organisation so must be able to show your adaptability and be comfortable talking to the CEO as you would be talking to the cook.

Organisational skills and flexibility is also a must in order to deal with a busy and unpredictable workload. It's a busy, changeable role that means you need to be good at juggling and adapting – so prioritising and scheduling skills are critical along with the ability to recognise the urgent from the truly important tasks and to manage many competing demands on your time.

As you progress up through the ranks you will also need a range of business and management skills as well as demonstrate commercial acumen.

Excellent interpersonal skills are a must as much of the job is spent influencing and convincing workers and management both to implement what you propose.

One of the most difficult aspects of the job to get your head around, particularly if you are changing careers, is the matrix and support structure of the HR Function. Unlike the more usual reporting structure, where most people know to who reports to whom and just what the pecking order is, the HR team effectively sits outside of any management hierarchy and so must work collaboratively with others in the organisation. With no direct reporting and/or management responsibility, the role the HR Professional has with employees across an organisation is advisory. So HR Professionals must become very skilled in communication, persuasion and influencing others to do as they want.

³ www.cipd.co.uk The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

⁴ www.joboutlook.gov.au

Directed, purposeful discussion, collaboration and negotiation are all skills you need plenty of, as HR is often called upon to settle disputes, manage conflict and negotiate outcomes that are acceptable to all parties and to the organisation itself.

There's also a lot of writing in the HR Role:

- ✓ Reports,
- ✓ Letters,
- ✓ Minutes,
- ✓ Policies and
- ✓ procedures

are all part of HR so you need to be good with language and know how to write a business report or prepare a presentation that focuses on what management wants to hear.

HR Professionals also need to have a strong and focused business and professional work ethic as you must be trustworthy and handle personal and confidential information. Another often overlooked skill set required by HR Professionals is structure. All HR Professionals must be able to write and follow policies and procedures as well as train others in their usefulness and instruct them in their application.

The ability to train and coach others either one on one or in small groups is another essential skill set for all HR Professionals who spend a considerable amount of time updating policies and procedures in line with internal and external changes in processes, regulations and legislation, and then must train others in them.

How do I start a Career in HR?

The ideal entry point for your new career in HR is the College for Adult Learning's nationally accredited BSB41013 Certificate IV in Human Resources as it provides essential prerequisite HR skills and knowledge for those commencing their career in HR.

It is also a great way for existing HR professionals to expand their generalist knowledge and for line managers and team leaders wanting to improve their people management skills and knowledge of current legislation.

There are no prerequisites for enrolment and participants of the program can select from workshop-format, or online learning.

The BSB41013 Certificate IV in Human Resources reflects the latest changes in HR and people management and takes a practical approach to a range of topics drawing both from comprehensive case studies and participants' work examples.

The College for Adult Learning's accredited BSB41013 Certificate IV in Human Resources has just been revised and updated and is recognised within the Australian Qualifications Framework and accepted as an HR entry level qualification by all employers Australia wide.

Who this course is suitable for

- ✓ Anyone looking to enter the field of HR
- ✓ HR professionals of any level wanting to expand their generalist knowledge
- ✓ Payroll officers who want to understand the broader context of their role within HR
- ✓ Office managers and administration personnel responsible for HR functions
- ✓ Personal and executive assistants who are regularly called on to support HR functions.

If you would like to hear more about:

- ❖ The skills needed to be an HR Professional,
- ❖ The sort of jobs you can select from and/or aspire too,
- ❖ The career pathways
- ❖ The current job prospects and remuneration packages or,
- ❖ The CIPD HR Professions Map and where to find it

Then you can contact an HR course advisor and industry specialist at the **College for Adult Learning**.

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