

Careers in HR - What are the Options?

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By john mce

The success of a company hinges greatly on its people. It's the role of the Human Resources (HR) department to help companies recruit, train, develop and manage their people. Getting the best from every employee makes a critical difference to the performance of the business.

People who choose HR as a career tend to like working with others, as there is extensive contact with people. Many also enjoy playing an important role in influencing all aspects of a business. There are a number of areas in which HR operates.

All HR roles need excellent communication skills, persuasive writing skills, a capacity to work to set deadlines, and an ability to speak confidently to a range of people, from candidates to senior management.

Recruitment and selection

HR professionals are involved at every stage of the recruitment and selection process. They prepare job descriptions, check application forms, test and interview candidates and play a significant part in determining who works for the company.

Learning and development

Learning and development is an ongoing process. Changes and advances in technology mean that jobs require different skills from year to year and employees need relevant training. Employees also need training to develop within their jobs and progress within the company. The L and D department will analyse the training needs within the organisation and get involved in the delivery and evaluation of learning.

Employment law

HR departments draft policies to meet the requirements of employment law, which are designed to give employees certain rights and keep them safe within the workplace. Employment law is changing on a regular basis. They may have to represent their organisation personally at an employment tribunal.

Employee relations

HR often help to resolve conflict between employees and managers or to solve problems when an employee is not performing as expected. They may be involved in negotiating with unions over pay and working conditions.

Employee relations encompasses many areas: grievances and disciplinary procedures, redundancies and important policy areas such as job grading, equal opportunities, harassment and bullying.

Reward

Sometimes known as compensation and benefits, reward covers the whole benefits package that helps to recruit people to an organisation and then motivate and retain them once they've arrived.

HR people can help develop reward programmes which are appropriate for every individual. As well as salaries and bonuses, rewards may include benefits such as flexible working hours, season ticket loans and childcare vouchers.

Health and Safety

All organisations need to protect the well-being of employees, customers, contractors and members of the public. The HR department can play a key role in ensuring that this happens. This may involve policies, procedures, safety assessments and audits.

It may also encompass providing advice to employees, promoting health and safety training.

You'll find there's a lot of variety in your day-to-day work and great opportunities to learn a wide range of new skills. Ultimately, you may get to influence the whole strategy and direction of an organisation. The importance of HR to the business is reflected in the salaries received by the top HR professionals.

John Mce writes articles on a number of subjects including Human resources jobs. Find local jobs in Reading and Glasgow and elsewhere in the UK.

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