

Personnel Management Degree

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Personnel management is a field that is in high demand. Also known as human resources, the personnel field is the branch of a company that deals with hiring, recruitment, retention, benefits, labor contracts, and employee management. They deal with the human capital of an organization, and are critical to the bottom line and the overall success of the organization. The human resources or personnel department of a company is responsible for finding employees that are the right fit for the company and who will bring in the most profit for the organizations. One of the most important functions of the human resources department is retention, or the retaining of current employees. The human resources department may implement a number of programs to keep employees happy and effective in their positions.

Operating an effective personnel department is essential to the function of every company, and companies pour thousands of dollars into maintaining an efficient and effective human resources department. Working toward a personnel management degree is an excellent way to break into the lucrative field of human resources.

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the field of Human Resources is extremely competitive. Human resources employees often enjoy high pay, bonuses and comprehensive benefits. There are also numerous opportunities for career advancement, and human resources specialists are the cornerstone of most organizations. Holding a degree in personnel management advances the opportunities of the human resources worker and allows him to earn and demand a higher salary. This also makes the potential hire more marketable toward hiring organizations.

The human resources careerist understands the importance of human capital in a business setting and is good with people. They have an eye for detail and understand and embrace the company's corporate culture.

Personnel managers operate in a number of functional areas and titles including:

Recruiters-Actively seek out competent employees to serve in open positions in the company. Recruiters find talent from pools of available applicants, other firms and through networking. Recruiters are often paid a salary as well as a commission for the applicants that they bring into the organization.

HR Specialists- Work with specialty divisions of the human resources department including hiring, benefits administrators, employee program creators and trainers. These specialists are experts in their functional areas and often work with staff in other areas of the human resources department.

HR Managers-These higher level position holders are in charge of the supervision of the specialists, recruiters and assistants in the department. Managers often have quality standards that need to be met and may also be paid a commission based on the productivity of their employees.

Benefits Administrators-These administrators handle the benefits of the organization and arrange for the administration of health insurance plans, group plans, bonuses and employee incentives. The benefits manager may also make suggestions to management regarding the development of new benefits plans for new and existing employees.

HR Generalists-Oversee the general functions of the human resources department. Includes management of recruiting staff, support staff, benefits administrators and labor relations managers. Education requirements usually requires an advanced degree in either human resources or general business.

Other personnel management/human resources areas include:

Equal Employment Opportunity officers
International Human Resources Managers
Alternative Dispute Resolution Managers
Human Resources Assistants
Compensation Specialists
Labor Relations Managers
Employee Relations Managers

Education

The entry into the field of personnel management usually requires the attainment of a bachelor of arts degree. Many human resources professionals do not hold an undergraduate degree in personnel management, but hold degrees in business management, which prepares them for an overall understanding of the inner-workings of a business. Many people pursue an advanced degree in Personnel or Human Resources Management. Others supplement their undergraduate degree with a certificate in human resource management or a specialty sector.

There are a number of business programs offered through accredited online colleges and universities. These programs include study toward the bachelor of arts in management, bachelor of business administration and bachelor of arts in human resource management. Courses in the study usually include management, finance, labor relations, statistics, psychology, organizational/industrial psychology, economics and general business. In addition, students studying toward the personnel management degree may take internships with local firms or work part time in the human resources departments of established firms.

The most popular degrees in business from online universities are from Kaplan University, the Keller Graduate School of Management at DeVry University, Capella University online and the University of Phoenix online. These schools offer the convenience of home study as well as provide an economical solution that allows students to save thousands of dollars on tuition, books and fees. Other universities include:

Bryant and Stratton College
Western Governor's University
Kaiser University
Walden University
Strayer University
Ashford University

Salary and Wages

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the average median salary of a human resources manager is approximately \$58,428 with the average salary being in the \$45,000-\$75,000 range. This salary is dependent on a number of factors including geographic location, level of education, years of experience and ability to carry out multiple functions. In addition, this figure does not include annual bonuses, commissions and benefits packages.

The salary range for human resources professionals varies widely, from human resources assistants who earn an hourly wage of between \$10 and \$19 an hour to executive level upper management associates who earn up to \$175,000 annually. This figure can jump to as high as \$300,000 in some industries such as healthcare and finance when the value of benefits, bonuses and commissions are factored in. The field is expected to grow with the addition of new jobs and organizations as the economy improves. The number of jobs is expected to increase exponentially, and salaries and wages are expected to follow suit.

Brick and Mortar Degree

Some of the best business schools in the country offer students concentrations in human resources, personnel management and benefits administration in addition to the business management degree. The top business school programs in the country offer excellent programs that help the student who is looking to earn a degree with a concentration in personnel management and related coursework. Those schools include:

Harvard University School of Business
Stanford Graduate School of Business
University of Pennsylvania Wharton
Massachusetts Institute of Technology
Columbia University
University of Chicago
New York University
Yale University

Certifications

There are a number of certifications that are available to human resources professionals who wish to further their professional careers. These include:

The Professional in Human Resources (PHR)
The Society of Human Resource Management (SHRM)
Global Professional in Human Resources (GPHR)

To the student looking to study in the lucrative field of personnel management, there are a number of career paths at their disposal. From human resources assistants to generalists, benefits administrators to compensation specialists and recruiters, there are limitless opportunities. Pursue a career in corporate training or head up the employee retention program. The field of human resources is a challenging and in-demand field and competition is fierce for these recession-proof careers. To set yourself apart from the crowd, consider earning a degree in personnel management. The role of human resources is essential to the functioning of any organization and with the economy picking up, the prospect for this field is growing.