

So, You Want to Work in Human Resources

Communication Studies Department

<http://www.mnstate.edu/cmst>

Overview: Every organization wants to attract the most qualified employees and match them to jobs for which they are best suited. However, many enterprises are too large to permit close contact between top management and employees. Human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists provide this connection.

The duties given to entry-level workers will vary, depending on whether the new workers have a degree in human resource management, have completed an internship, or have some other type of human resources-related experience. Entry-level workers often enter formal or on-the-job training programs.

There are many types of human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists.

- In a small organization, a *human resources generalist* may handle all aspects of human resources work, and thus require an extensive range of knowledge. The responsibilities of human resources generalists can vary widely, depending on their employer's needs.
- In a large corporation, the *director of human resources* may supervise several departments, each headed by an experienced manager who most likely specializes in one human resources activity, such as employment and placement; compensation, and benefits; training and development; or labor relations. The director may report to a top human resources executive.
- *Employment and placement managers* supervise the hiring and separation of employees. They also supervise employment, recruitment, and placement specialists, including recruitment specialists and employment interviewers. *Employment, recruitment, and placement specialists* recruit and place workers.

Education and Training: In filling entry-level jobs, many employers seek college graduates who have majored in human resources, human resources administration, or industrial and labor relations. Other employers look for college graduates with a technical or business background or a well-rounded liberal arts education. Because an interdisciplinary background is appropriate in this field, a combination of courses in the social sciences, business, and behavioral sciences is useful. Most prospective human resources specialists should take courses in compensation, recruitment, training and development, and performance appraisal, as well as courses in principles of management, organizational structure, and industrial psychology. Other relevant courses include business administration, public administration, psychology, sociology, political science, economics, and statistics.

Other Qualifications: The human resources field demands a range of personal qualities and skills. Human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists must speak and write effectively. The growing diversity of the workforce requires that they work with or supervise people with various cultural backgrounds, levels of education, and experience. They must be able to cope with conflicting points of view, function under pressure, and demonstrate discretion, integrity, fair-mindedness, and a persuasive, congenial personality. Advanced degrees in law or business may be required for executive level positions.

Job Outlook: Employment of human resources, training, and labor relations managers and specialists is expected to grow faster than the average for all occupations.

For More Information: <http://www.bls.gov/oco/ocos021.htm>

Source: U.S. Department of Labor, Occupational Outlook Handbook