



Developing your Graduate Attributes through studying the PG Diploma/MA in Human Resource Management (HRM)

The PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme at Keele provides students with a diverse range of opportunities to acquire the intellectual, personal and professional capabilities that will stand the individual in good stead during and after their studies. HRM is a multidisciplinary subject area that is concerned with the world of work. HRM deals with the complex issues involved in the employment relationship from an economic, legal, political and social perspective. It provides essential knowledge for the management and experience of work at the national, European and international level. Areas like employers and the management of labour, employee resources, employee relations, pay, recruitment and selection, performance management, equality, and training and development, are at the centre of study. It is a distinctive feature of this programme that the field of study includes the theory, development and practice of industrial relations as a core part of human resource management. PG Diploma/MA in HRM graduates are equipped with the knowledge and skills to pursue either further postgraduate study or a variety of careers, in a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations.

This document exemplifies the graduate attributes that will develop as a result of engaging in the Keele PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme. It also explains how these attributes are embedded in the learning activities undertaken during your study. This information can be used in conjunction with a personal development plan to manage progress (in both personal and career development), to track learning and achievements, and to enable individuals to make the best use of opportunities available at Keele and in the wider community.

Through full engagement with the course, you will be able to develop:

1. An open and questioning approach to ideas, demonstrating curiosity, independence of thought and the ability to appreciate a range of perspectives on HRM and the employment relationship.
2. An appreciation of the development and value of the main issues and ideas relevant to HRM, an awareness of their contexts, of the links between these as well as the links between HRM and other disciplines, and an awareness of the provisional and dynamic nature of theoretical advances in HRM and emerging organisational issues.

3. Information literacy, including the ability to locate, evaluate and synthesise large amounts of frequently conflicting information, ideas and data relevant to the study of HRM.
4. The ability to resolve problems creatively, using a range of different approaches and techniques, and to determine which techniques are appropriate for the issue at hand with regard to work related matters.
5. An appreciation of the social, environmental and global context of HRM and related activities, including the recognition of the ethical implications.
6. The ability to communicate clearly and effectively in written and verbal forms for different purposes and to a variety of audiences.
7. The knowledge, skills, self-confidence and self-awareness actively to pursue your future goals, whether they are HRM related or otherwise.
8. The ability and motivation to participate responsibly and collaboratively as an active citizen in the communities in which you live and work, as well as the ability to collaborate with people from diverse backgrounds.
9. A professional and reflective approach, including qualities of leadership, responsibility, personal integrity, empathy, care and respect for others, accountability and self-regulation.
10. The flexibility to thrive in rapidly changing and uncertain external environments and to update skills and knowledge as circumstances require.

How These Graduate Attributes are Realised

The above attributes are developed during your study at Keele and may be enhanced depending upon the opportunities that are taken outside of the academic curriculum. What follows are some key examples of where graduate attributes are developed in the PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme. Naturally, the development of these attributes will often overlap in practice, with some learning contexts developing several graduate attributes at the same time.

Attribute 1 – an open and questioning approach to ideas and perspectives

An open and questioning approach to ideas, demonstrating curiosity, independence of thought and the ability to appreciate a range of perspectives on HRM is adopted in all modules in the PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme. Our modules aim to enhance your critical intellect through a versatile curriculum and various modes of teaching and learning. A distinctive feature of the programme is its developmental nature. Modules are taught consecutively, starting with an induction week that helps you to identify key topics and terminology covered in the programme. The subsequent foundation module provides the

first step in developing a critical understanding of HRM by introducing the nature, the context and the three perspectives of the employment relationship, and the different approaches to job regulation. Subsequently, emphasis is placed on reading widely and developing the ability critically to appraise various theories, concepts, processes and models involved in the management of labour and the management of the employment relationship. In later modules, the focus is shifted to independent thought and intellect with respect to specialised HRM areas, such as pay determination and training and development. Finally, if you are studying for the MA in HRM you will produce a research dissertation, demonstrating your ability to absorb and reflect the current state of knowledge in the discipline, as well as your ability to present independently researched and analysed issues and arguments.

Attribute 2 – an appreciation of the development and values of HRM as a subject

All modules foster an appreciation of the development and value of the subject area, and awareness of how the subject can be applied to different professional contexts. For example, the module *Employers and the Management of Labour* introduces you to the meaning, role and origins of labour management and different labour management techniques. All our modules also raise awareness of different elements of the institutional context (political, economic, legal, social) of HRM and the provisional and dynamic nature of knowledge and practice. You will explore historical aspects of management, such as bureaucracy, alienation and conflict in the contemporary workplace, the changing impact of the state, the labour market and the economy on labour management, as well as the role and function of unions, employers and employers' associations. Given the multidisciplinary nature of HRM as a subject area, all our modules make relevant links to other disciplines where appropriate, such as economics, industrial relations, sociology, and law. Throughout the course, international developments are considered in the analysis of the subject area.

Attribute 3 – the ability to locate, evaluate and synthesise complex information

Information literacy is fostered throughout the year and will be developed from the outset of the PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme where, for example, the Library Liaison Officer delivers a library session as part of the induction process to the programme. There will be regular opportunities to practice your information handling skills as you prepare for course assignments for each of the modules. Students will be provided with guidance on academic writing and the synthesis of information for academic purposes, and can seek further guidance and support from the course team and the Keele Liaison Librarian for Social Science. Students whose first language is not English receive support from the English Language Unit of the University, which provides regular language classes and one-to-one tuition. The ability to locate, evaluate and synthesise large amounts of frequently conflicting information, ideas and data is further enhanced through the dissertation module, which provides students pursuing the MA in HRM with the opportunity to undertake a programme of independent research.

Attribute 4 – the ability creatively to solve problems

The ability to problem-solve is developed throughout the PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme and these skills will strengthen as you progress through the course. A critical approach is adopted in all of our modules allowing an understanding of general principles to be acquired in various work related situations. You will explore and assess different methods of work organisation and labour management, gain an understanding of workplace procedures and practices and address some real-life problems and implications in tutorial sessions and by exploring research-based evidence in your literature. Students who go on to complete a research dissertation further develop these abilities through conducting detailed and systematic research of their chosen topic and reaching conclusions based on sound argument and understanding of relevant research-based evidence.

Attribute 5 – awareness and appreciation of global, social and ethical implications

An appreciation of the social, environmental and global context of HRM and related activities, including recognition of the ethical implications is manifested throughout the PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme. Many of the modules examine the functioning and implications of international and global work related issues, like staffing, employee relations and performance management, or training and development, and explore HRM and the employment relationship in different regional and international contexts. The course encourages a critical understanding of economic, social and legal foundations of the employment relationship, and students also receive research training on the ethical implications of empirical research in preparation of their research dissertation.

Attribute 6 – effective written and verbal communication skills

Written and verbal communication skills are progressively developed during the PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme and various types of feedback on how such skills can be further enhanced is provided in all our modules. Every module involves some form of written and verbal work, including discussions and debates, interpretation, analysis, case studies, as well as more traditional essay assessments and at times, formal and informal presentations. Students are encouraged to discuss formative essay plans (not counting towards the module mark) with their tutors, which aims to improve your performance in summative assessment (counting towards the module mark). Small-group tutorial teaching encourages high levels of student participation. With regard to written communication, students are provided with guidance sessions on how to construct a critical and analytical academic essay as well as the style, content and structure required for a good postgraduate essay. You will also receive information on plagiarism and how to avoid it. Your written communication skills will be further developed if you proceed to the research dissertation, and a supervisor will be allocated to support and guide you through the process of writing a 15,000-word dissertation. Training on how to plan and structure your dissertation will be provided as part of the module *Understanding and Researching the Employment Relationship*. Students whose first language is not English receive additional support from the English Language Unit of the University, which provides regular English language classes and one-to-one tutorials. Sessions provided aim to develop written and verbal communication skills, specific vocabulary, and critical reading and writing skills.

Attribute 7 – knowledge, skills, self-confidence and self-awareness to pursue goals

Through enabling individuals to work with both real-life work related problems/issues and those of an academic nature, the PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme provides a variety of experiences and challenges to help you to develop the knowledge, skills, self-confidence and self-awareness to pursue future goals. Self-awareness of your academic progress is raised through feedback provided through the academic members of the HRM programme following each assessment. Such feedback assists you to review and reflect on your past performance with the aim to improve your future performance so as to achieve your desired degree classification.

Whilst students may already have clear career goals in mind, students who would like to explore the options available to make the best use of their skills and knowledge obtained through their study can talk to the team at the Keele University Careers and Employability Service. Students can also discuss with staff of the HRM academic group the possibility of pursuing a PhD in HRM and/or Industrial Relations if they wish to continue their studies to doctoral level.

Additionally, there is a wide range of co-curriculum activities that you can pursue in order to enhance your self-confidence and self-awareness. Examples include becoming a Student Academic Representative (StAR) for the PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme, volunteering opportunities in the wider community, and becoming a member of one of the many student societies.

Attribute 8 – the ability and motivation to participate as an active citizen

The ability and motivation to participate responsibly and collaboratively as an active citizen in the communities in which you live and work is developed in the various co-curricular opportunities discussed above (e.g. becoming a StAR for the PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme) and also through the team work activities within the programme. Your team-working skills are developed formally and informally in some of our modules, either through scheduled group presentations, or through ad-hoc working groups in tutorials. This exposes you to a wide range of collaborations, with students from various backgrounds (e.g. home and international students), and equips you with the appropriate skills to meet the challenges of working with others.

Outside of the academic programme, you further have the opportunity to gain high-quality volunteering experiences in partnership with a wide range of local and global organisations through the 'Keele Community Connections' initiative. This will enable you to make a positive and valuable contribution to social, environmental and economic agendas locally, nationally and internationally.

Attribute 9 – a professional and reflective approach

A professional and reflective approach, including qualities of leadership, responsibility, personal integrity, empathy, care and respect for others, accountability and self-regulation is pursued through the extra curriculum activities mentioned in attributes 7 and 8. Such an

approach is further fostered through module level opportunities, such as taking part in team presentations and small-group discussions. One of the key aims of the PG Diploma/MA in HRM programme is the emphasis placed on helping you to understand the limits of leadership, and the constraints on personal action. The programme will explore the degree to which the exercise of personal skills and commitment is constrained by the enormous social, economic and political pressures in which individuals struggle to work and to manage others and students are encouraged critically to reflect on the limitations of labour regulation.

Attribute 10 – ability to adapt to rapidly changing and uncertain environments

Studying, theorising and analysing emerging and topical HRM issues help you gain a unique understanding and experience of the latest HRM developments in a variety of industry, workplace and social settings. This enables you to develop the skills and attitudes necessary to thrive in a diverse range of careers after graduation. The HRM programme focuses on developing an understanding of the implications of the ever-changing economic, global and social environments and how this affects HR professionals, businesses, workers, stakeholders, the government and other important institutions at national, pan-national and international level. The research-led ethos of the HRM group means that you will be introduced to the latest developments and thinking in the field, through diverse readings, the empirical research of lecturers in the group and individual research projects. Modules throughout the programme examine current trends in the field, therefore, ensuring that you stay abreast of theoretical advances and emerging employment issues as well as enabling analysis of contemporary changes in the complex environment of the world of work.