Programme Specification: MA Human Resources Management

This document applies to students who commence the programme in or after September 2017

1.	Awarding Institution/Body	University of Worcester
2.	Teaching Institution	University of Worcester
3.	Programme Accredited By	None (at present)
4.	Final Award	MA
5.	Programme Title	MA Human Resources Management
6.	Pathways Available	Not Applicable
7.	Mode and/or site of delivery	Part time, UW
8.	Mode of Attendance	Part time over one year
9.	UCAS Code	N/A
10.	Subject Benchmark Statement	Masters Awards in Business and Management
11.	Date of Programme Specification Preparation/ Revision	Nov 2010; August and October 2014 – amendment to regulations; August 2016 - Regulations/Section 20 amended August 2017 - AQU amendments

12. Educational Aims of the Programme

This programme aims to build upon the theories, tools and techniques incorporated in the CIPD Professional Development Scheme to allow students to convert their 120 Level 7 (FHEQ M level) award to a 180 credit Level 7 Masters award. The programme adopts a research-driven approach to investigating human resource management and aims to develop the learner's understanding and critical appreciation of the discipline through the specialist dissertation. In particular, the purpose of the programme is to provide students with:

- A stimulating academic environment which is based upon the values of academic openness and critical appraisal;
- A critical understanding of different research methodologies, and the ability to design and implement an advanced dissertation study related to applied strategic human resource management
- Further preparation for a career in HR Management, by developing the key skills required together with an ability to engage in self-managed research;
- An ability to apply knowledge and understanding of HR Management to complex organisational issues, both systematically and creatively, to improve management practice.

13. Intended Learning Outcomes and Learning, Teaching and Assessment Methods Knowledge and understanding	
Knowledge and understanding of:	Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:
- The range of research methods that can be applied to the study of HR Management and leadership. - The application of strategic thinking to successful HR Management in a variety of organisational contexts.	- A programme of half-day or evening interactive workshops, comprising group work sessions and one-to-one tutorials. - The researching and writing of assignments and subsequent oral and written feedback.

• The principles and practice of HR Management and leadership in private, public and voluntary sector organisations.	• In-depth, self-directed research and tutorial guidance and discussion. • Research-based knowledge and understanding assessed through the dissertation.
Intellectual/cognitive skills:	**Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:**
• Critical thinking and critical appraisal applied to current areas of the curriculum in the HR area, and to the context of their work within national and international frameworks. • The application of a range of HR Manage techniques, tools and theories in analysin evaluating organisational issues. • Problem solving and dealing with complex issues of a strategic nature. • Exercising judgement and understanding in relation to ethical issues.	• Module BUSM4005 requires learners to engage in discussion and the critical application of key concepts. • Data analysis and group discussions, offer students the opportunity to engage in problem solving and complex issues. • Modules BUSM4005 and 4006 require analytical skills to be applied to a variety of data. • The dissertation exploring a human resource management issue requires judgement to be exercised. • Intellectual and cognitive skills are assessed through the written assignments.
Professional practical skills	**Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:**
• Engage in information retrieval, organisation and effective dissemination. • Reflect more critically upon approaches to human resource management in dealing with complex issues. • Demonstrate an ability to conduct independently managed research into leadership and management issues in a variety of private, public and voluntary sector contexts. • Presentation skills.	• School ILS contact runs session during induction relating to information resources available. • Group and individual tasks involving library and internet-based information retrieval feature in various modules. • Chat-room facilities enabled through a VLE (WebCT). • Project-based tasks involving group activities. • Research methods module and dissertation provide group-based and individual support for the development of research skills. • Assessment of information dissemination skills through oral presentations (formative assessment). • Written assignments used to assess research skills.
Transferable/key skills:	**Examples of teaching, learning and assessment methods used:**
• Numeracy and quantitative skills. • Two-way communication skills. • Self management skills and personal effectiveness, e.g. time management • Professional development. • Effective use of ICT.	• Quantitative skills taught through use of worked examples, e.g. in research methods. • Interactive L & T approaches are used to develop two-way communication skills. • Time management skills are conveyed as an integral element of successfully completing the dissertation. • Certain quantitative skills are assessed through appropriate formative and summative assignments. • Reflective learning is promoted through development of the research proposal for the dissertation.

Table 13.1 Audit of programme learning outcomes mapped against constituent modules

Knowledge and Understanding of :	BUSM4005	BUSM4006
The range of research methods that can be applied to the study of HR Management and leadership.	✕	
The application of strategic thinking to successful HR Management in a variety of organisational contexts.		✕
The principles and practice of HR Management and leadership in private, public and voluntary sector organisations		✕
Intellectual/ Cognitive Skills		
Critical thinking and critical appraisal applied to current areas of the curriculum in the HR area, and to the context of their work within national and international frameworks.		✕
The application of a range of HR Management techniques, tools and theories in analysing and evaluating organisational issues.		✕
Problem solving and dealing with complex issues of a strategic nature.	✕	✕
Exercising judgement and understanding in relation to ethical issues.	✕	✕
Professional practical skills		
Engage in information retrieval, organisation and effective dissemination.	✕	✕
Reflect more critically upon approaches to human resource management in dealing with complex issues.	✕	✕
Demonstrate an ability to conduct independently managed research into leadership and management issues in a variety of private, public and voluntary sector contexts.		✕
Presentation skills.	✕	✕
Transferable/key skills:		
Numeracy and quantitative skills	✕	
Two-way communication skills	✕	
Self management skills and personal effectiveness, e.g. time management	✕	✕
Professional development	✕	✕
Effective use of ICT	✕	✕

A good variety of learning and teaching methods have been designed for use in the modules that comprise the programme, including group work, critiques (of a piece of academic writing from a peer-reviewed journal), and analysis using appropriate computer software. The course will utilise a combination of weekly contact sessions or study blocks and other flexible modes of delivery, in combination with one-to-one tutorials between students and their supervisor. In developing the programme, consideration has been given to the following: -

- facilitation of self directed and autonomous learning;
- the need to encourage supportive learning networks;
- Personal Academic & Course Tutors acting as facilitators to develop and enhance study skills and reflection upon required assessment tasks;
- sessions linked to the Research Methods module structured around pre-reading material;
- group and individual-based formative assessment tasks;

Supervision and guidance is therefore facilitated through:

- The adoption of teaching and learning strategies given above.
- Workplace mentorship (encouraged but not mandatory).
- Scheduling of tutorial contact (particularly in relation to the dissertation) on a regular basis via personal academic tutorials to coincide with times when support is particularly needed, e.g. initial preparation, progress checks.

Assessment approaches have been adopted which will be compatible with, and enhance, the teaching and learning ethos.

In relation to the research-based areas of teaching, the module in Research Methods is designed to provide the necessary guidance required by the student to undertake a piece of supervised research. In order to support this learning outcome, students will be required to develop a viable research proposal which they will present to an audience that includes a member of the teaching team with the necessary subject knowledge. This member of staff will then normally be designated as the supervisor for the dissertation component of the course which follows on from the Research Methods module and concludes the award.

The Business School fully embraces the University's E-Learning strategy, and has to date demonstrated some innovative practices in this area. In particular, a member of the MBA teaching team received funding from the Mercia Institute of Enterprise for developing online teaching materials.

The teaching and learning strategies for modules BUSM4005 and BUSM4006 that have been outlined in this document have been undertaken in accordance with the University's Learning Outcomes Policy

14. Assessment strategy

As with the Learning and Teaching strategy, outlined above, the Assessment strategy has been designed to provide students with a number of challenges appropriate for Masters level work. Assessment is constructed in such a way that a student's knowledge and understanding of each module studied during the course is assessed.

Students will complete their assessed work on an individual basis. However, at postgraduate level, students are actively encouraged to discuss their understanding of models, concepts and theories, and more importantly their application to a given scenario, with other members of their group. This allows students to share ideas and experiences, test their understanding, and more critically evaluate the models under discussion, thereby learning from each other and developing relationships that will help them through their studies.

Assessment items are scheduled so that they can be completed on an ongoing basis throughout the academic year. Detailed assessment briefs are given to students at the start of a module. In marking assessed work, moderation and double marking is standard practice. Where there is some doubt as to the authorship of an assessment, University of Worcester has its own published policy for investigating plagiarism.

In testing student understanding great use is made of relevant and up to date case studies that encourage students to apply management theories, models and concepts to critically evaluate real world situations. In addition, assessment will be linked to the student's own workplace. In this way students are encouraged to use their studies to critically evaluate and reflect upon their own organisations, and their role within them.

The overall purpose of this assessment is to enable students to:

* Demonstrate that they have the intellectual rigour commensurate with a course of this nature and have developed the analytical skills expected of study at post-graduate level

* Develop and demonstrate their capacity for in-depth research and the ability to arrive at creative and critical responses to leadership and management issues

* Demonstrate the ability to synthesise appropriate theories, models and concepts from the course (and their previous academic studies), and apply them to critically evaluate real world leadership and HR management scenarios

* Gain experience in working individually and as part of a team

* Maximise the opportunity to utilise and share their own experience(s) and research to produce concise documents of the kind used in the management decision making process

* Receive continuous, regular and appropriate feedback throughout the course

* Develop the intellectual and practical abilities required of those involved in an HR managerial function.

The range of assessments specified in the module outlines (see Table 14.1 for a summary) have been developed in order to support the pedagogical approaches employed and which are appropriate for the nature of the subject covered.

Table 14.1: Assessment Strategy

Module	Title	2,000 word Written Submission	4,000+ word Written Submission
BUSM 4005	Research Methods	1 Critique (40%) 1 Seminar paper 60%	
BUSM 4006	Dissertation		10,000 word Dissertation 100%

In line with the University of Worcester [Assessment Policy](#) assessments for the individual modules have been designed to enable students to demonstrate that they have successfully met the learning outcomes. Each module outline thus specifies an assessment strategy outlining the nature of the summative assessment exercises it employs and the respective weighting of each assessment item in its overall assessment loading.

15. Programme structures and requirements

Award Map

The award structure for the MA Human Resource Management programme is set out in the table below. Students who complete the two modules BUSM4005 and BUSM4006 are eligible for the award.

Students enter the programme having completed all 4 elements of the CIPD Professional Development Scheme (120 M level credits)

LEVEL 7				
Module Code	Module Title	Credits (Number)	Status Mandatory (M) or Optional (O)	Prerequisites (Code of Module required)
BUSM4005	Research Methods	20	M	n/a
BUSM4006	Dissertation	40	M	n/a

MA/MSc Requirements

Students completing the Masters award must take the 2 Mandatory modules, i.e. BUSM4005 and BUSM4006. Students must successfully complete 180 credits in total, including their 120 credits completed as part of their entry qualification.

The programme is designed to allow students to complete the MA in part time mode over one academic year. The dissertation will be completed after BUSM4005 (Research Methods), which will usually take place in semester 1 for part-time students, though current work is being completed to convert much of the BUSM4005 learning material to e-learning format which will provide greater flexibility for entry to the programme. Attendance at all scheduled group sessions of BUSM4005 is strongly encouraged and students who are unable to attend should provide prior notification to the course manager via e-mail.

The dissertation will conform to the ethical practice and approval guidelines set out for the University. Students will be required to gain authorisation from any organisation that they conduct this work with, in accordance with the ethical practice and guidance of the University, as necessary.

16. QAA and professional academic standards and quality

QAA benchmarking of Masters programmes in business and management within the UK recognises that there is a wide diversity of courses available and that these different orientations need to be explicitly addressed when designing the Learning, Teaching and Assessment requirements, as well as the specific Knowledge, Understanding and Skills that underpin each type of course.

The different types of business and management Masters courses, as defined by QAA, are set out in Table 16.1 (see appendix 3). The current proposal is designed to offer a Type 1B award which provides further career development. It represents a specialist award, unlike the MBA (to be validated at current event) which is an award of a more generalist nature. Type 1 courses are oriented towards students who normally have a cognate first degree and possibly some employment experience. Type 1B courses typify study offering a more professional orientation.

The QAA subject benchmarks for Masters awards in business and management specify key areas of knowledge and understanding and these have been used to inform the Assessment strategy for this programme in HR Management. The mapping exercise shown in Table 16.2 (appendix 3) demonstrates the way in which the modules (BUSM4005 and BUSM4006) contribute to the ten key areas of knowledge and understanding.

The QAA subject benchmarks also provide a skill set for Masters programmes and these have been mapped in Table 16.3 to show how the modules act to support the key transferable skills associated with business and management.

The programme conforms to the requirements set out for Masters level qualifications by the FHEQ. In particular, the modules are designed to help instil within students a critical awareness of current research and scholarship within the disciplines of management. The

Dissertation, in particular, provides students with an opportunity to engage in a critical review and application of research methodologies relevant to the area of research in human resource management, applied to an area relevant to their own organisational setting.

Finally, appendix 1 contains information mapping the MA Human Resource Management programme against the Leadership and Management Standards agreed by the Management Standards Centre (Professional Lead Body in the area of Leadership and Management). Appendix 3, as noted above, contains information, mapping the programme and its constituent modules against the QAA Subject Benchmarks for PG programmes in Business and Management.

17. Support for students

The following activities and documents have been put in place to provide support for Masters students at Worcester Business School:

- Induction programme including inputs from Student Services and International Office
- Course handbook and modules outlines
- Support from ILS staff during induction and through Information Desk and Study Guides
- Representation on Programme Committee to address course-wide issues
- Each student is allocated a Personal Academic Tutor to provide support for learning.
- Students are encouraged to seek a workplace mentor, for whom support will be provided by the course team in the form of a mentor training session (one evening at UW). A mentor adds value to the student experience, but is not a mandatory requirement of the course.
- Registry provides student-specific information, including module results, on the SOLE page of the University website
- Range of support services including accommodation office through Student Services
- Special events for international students co-ordinated by International Office
- English language support provision (where necessary, as in case of International students)
- Equal opportunities unit implements codes of practice in relation to disability and racial and other forms of discrimination

18. Admissions policy, criteria and procedures

General admissions requirements of the programme are as follows:

- All students to be accepted to the programme will be required to have completed all four elements of the CIPD Personal Development Scheme (equivalent to 120 Level 7 points (NQF). In the event of a candidate presenting an 'alternative' qualification, this will be checked for equivalence to the CIPD qualification prior to a decision. It is not essential that students are in employment on enrolment to the programme.
- Students whose first language is not English are required to demonstrate proficiency to a minimum level of 6.5 IELTS or equivalent.
- Whilst it is expected that candidates will have an employment history in order for their completion of the prerequisite CIPD (or equivalent) award, it is not essential that they are in employment for the duration of the top-up MA course.
- Candidates will only be interviewed where doubt exists in relation to information provided via the application form, concerning their meeting the entry criteria.

    See Admissions Policy for other acceptable qualifications.

Recognition of Prior Learning

Students with relevant previous study at postgraduate level or with extensive experience may be considered eligible for recognition of prior learning. Please contact the Registry Admissions Office for further information or guidance on 01905 855111.

Further information on Recognition of Prior Learning can be found at
http://www.worcester.ac.uk/registryservices/941.htm

19. Methods for evaluating and improving the quality and standards of teaching and learning

Mechanisms for review and evaluation of teaching, learning, assessment, the curriculum and outcome standards, include:

- Module feedback
- Annual Course Monitoring Report completed by course manager
- Periodic review including external scrutiny
- Quinquennial course review including external scrutiny
- Peer teaching observation
- External examiners reports
- Academic staff annual appraisal
- Feedback from workplace mentors (where applicable)

Committees with responsibility for monitoring and evaluating quality and standards

- Business School Departmental Quality Assurance Committee
- Business School Post Results Moderation Group
- Programme Committee chaired by course manager, and including staff and student membership to oversee operation of the course, and to meet mid-way through the course and at the course-end as part of a programme evaluation. In practice, this will operate as part of the arrangements which apply to the MBA programme.
- University Postgraduate Board of Studies
- Masters Programmes Forum
- Academic Quality and Standards Committee
- International Committee (where applicable)
- Ethics Committee
- Learning and Teaching Committee

Mechanisms for gaining student feedback on the quality of teaching and their learning experience

- Module feedback questionnaires
- Programme committee students matters item
- Meetings with Personal Academic Tutor
- Meetings with mentors/ training managers (at sponsoring organisations). It should be noted that organisation-based mentors, whilst strongly encouraged and desirable, are not mandatory for the programme. Guidance sessions for mentors and mentees are integrated with the programme. Students who are unable to make arrangements for mentor support will be notified that they must make at least two

appointments with their Personal Academic Tutor during the course of the programme.

The Business School has a number of Teaching Fellows with the responsibility of developing and enhancing the learning experience of all students within the school.

20. Regulation of Assessment

The course operates under the University's [Taught Courses Regulatory Framework](#)

Requirements to pass modules
- Modules are assessed using a variety of assessment activities which are detailed in the module specifications.
- The minimum pass mark is D- for each module.
- Students are required to submit all items of assessment in order to pass a module, and in some modules, a pass mark in each item of assessment may be required.
- Full details of the assessment requirements for a module, including the assessment criteria, are published in the module outline.

Submission of assessment items
- Students who submit course work late but within 5 days of the due date will have work marked, but the grade will be capped at D- unless an application for mitigating circumstances is accepted.
- Students who submit work later than 5 days but within 14 days of the due date will not have work marked unless they have submitted a valid claim of mitigating circumstances.
- For full details of submission regulations please see the Taught Courses Regulatory Framework.

Retrieval of failure
- Students are entitled to resit failed assessment items for any module that is awarded a fail grade.
- Reassessment items that are passed are capped at D-.
- If a student is unsuccessful in the reassessment, they have the right to retake the module (or, in some circumstances, take an alternative module); the module grade for a re-taken module is capped at D-.
- A student who fails 60 credits or more after exhausting all reassessment opportunities may be required to withdraw from the University.

Award	Requirement
MA in Human Resource Management	180 credits at Level 7 (FHEQ M level), including a Dissertation*, as specified on the award map

* please note: students will join the programme with 120 credits at Level 7 having completed all four elements of the CIPD's Professional Development Scheme.

The award of Masters may be made with Pass, Merit or Distinction.

21. Indicators of Quality and Standards

- Director of Business and Professional Development (who has overall responsibility for the quality of professional development programmes offered by the School) is a trained QAA Institutional Auditor.
- Many members of staff engaged in developing the programme are actively engaged in relevant research and consultancy in the discipline of HR Management (refer to Staff CVs for further details)
- Annual External Examiners reports for the School (at both UG and PG level) have been extremely supportive and complimentary

22. Career opportunities and links with employers

- Worcester Business School has recently appointed a Director of Business and Professional Development in order to promote closer links with employers, and this role is supported by a newly appointed Business Development Consultant. These, together with the Course Manager for the programme will be responsible for external liaison. At the time of writing, Worcester Business School is in the process of establishing an Employers' Advisory Group to guide and advise upon course development.
- Worcester Business School management development programmes have been supported extensively over the years, by a range of organisations including Worcestershire County Council, West Mercia Constabulary, British Red Cross Society, Baxenden Chemicals Ltd, Bristol Babcock Ltd, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Ambulance Service NHS Trust, Herefordshire Council, Malvern Hills District Council, Pipe Supports Ltd, Qinetiq, Taylors of Martley and Mazak.
- The Business School's specialist research and consultancy centre, the Centre for People @ Work, has a wide range of projects of a human resources nature, and opportunities to provide links with employers.
- The School has been an important focus of projects linked with the West Mercia police constabulary through the Shared Police and Higher Education (SPHERE) partnership. Similar arrangements 'could' exist with any employer for research purposes.
- University of Worcester Careers Advisory Service provides on-going support for students
- Periodic Career Fairs are organised by Student Services.

Please note: This specification provides a concise summary of the main features of the programme and the learning outcomes that a typical student might reasonably be expected to achieve and demonstrate if she/he takes full advantage of the learning opportunities that are provided. More detailed information on the learning outcomes, content and teaching, learning and assessment methods of each module can be found in associated course documentation e.g. course handbooks, module outlines and module specifications.