Human Resource Management and Development

Module Introduction and Overview

Contents

1   Introduction to the Module

This module is concerned with the management and development of staff in
public organisations, known popularly as Human Resource Management
and Development (HRM). The basic idea is simple – that all organisations,
and not just those in the public sector, can improve their performance if they
manage their staff properly. Very often, HRM is also associated with a series
of practices related to the main activities of managing people and that we, as
employees, experience directly. This may include recruiting new staff or
training and developing existing staff.

An important focus is the organisation – where the management of people
takes place. This element of HRM is particularly interested in how people
behave in formal work settings. This module takes the public sector organi-
sation as its primary formal work setting, but as you will quickly discover,
HRM as a field of management study is derived from the private sector,
primarily in the US. It is worth bearing this in mind throughout this module.
Thus, the concept of HRM did not really begin to be applied to the public
sector until the 'second wave' of New Public Management during the 1990s
in the mainly Anglophone developed countries (UK, United States, Canada,
New Zealand and Australia) and some other countries in western Europe.
Typically, prior to the 1990s, 'people management' was referred to as 'per-
sonnel administration/management' or 'establishments' in some civil
services and regarded as a discrete staff functional area.

This module will also concentrate on HRM issues in public sector organisa-
tions, rather than in the economy as a whole, or in society. In addition, we
will be looking at HRM from a management perspective although there will
be times, especially as the focus is on the public sector, when HRM will be
viewed as a political activity. An example of this are the 'Gulfization'
policies of the Middle East oil states whereby nationals are encouraged to
work in the private sector rather than the public sector to improve the
economic performance of the country as a whole. There will be similar
illustrations of this nature later in the module.

The main objective of this module is to develop a critical appreciation of the
strategic role of HRM not only in a public sector context, but within the
overall constraints of different political, cultural and institutional environ-
ments. Although the module introduces you to the main features, or 'good
practice' in HRM, we hope you can develop a critical awareness of its
applicability to a given organisation. In addition, HRM is not a field of study
independent of other modules in your MSc programme; it is related to many
other areas including the management of change, project management and
policy implementation.

2   The Module Author

Richard Common is a senior lecturer at Manchester Business School, the University of Manchester, UK. He was awarded a DPhil. from the University of York, a MSc (econ.) from the London School of Economics and a BA (Hons) from the University of Lancaster. Richard has many years of experience lecturing at Master's level, including MBA programmes, in the fields of public management, human resource management and professional development. He has also lectured extensively outside the UK in the Middle East and Asia. Richard has a variety of publications in this area, including an edited volume with Peter Carroll (Tasmania) *Policy Transfer and Learning in Public Policy and Management: International Contexts, Content and Development*.

3   Study Resources

📖 Key text

The key text for this module is:

Bailey C, D Mankin, C Kelliher and T Garavan (2018) *Strategic Human Resource Management*. 2nd Edition. Oxford UK, Oxford University Press.

This book was selected not only because it was contemporaneous but because it offers the right and consistent blend of theory and practice commensurate with Master's level study at a world-leading University. However, it is a generic book in that it considers all sectors of the economy. Unfortunately, there is no single book currently on the market that focuses on HRM in the public sector and is of sufficient quality and with attributes that meets your needs as SOAS students. Most dedicated HRM textbooks on the public sector also focus exclusively on US organisations.

Module Readings

The module study guide is supplemented by additional module readings comprising articles, book chapters, *etc*. Taken together, we hope that these sources will equip you to understanding and applying HRM in a range of contexts and institutional settings, while being aware of the pitfalls surrounding 'best practice' approaches.

4   Module Overview

Unit 1   Strategic HRM for the Public Sector

    1.1   Introduction to HRM
    1.2   The Activities of HRM
    1.3   The Context of HRM
    1.4   Strategic HRM
    1.5   Strategic HRM in the Public Sector
    1.6   Conclusion

5   Learning Outcomes

When you have completed your study of this module, you will be able to:

- present a 'strategic' model of human resource management and development (HRM/D)
- assess the main functions of strategic HRM/D primarily, but not exclusively, in public sector organisations
- discuss the main contemporary issues for HRM/D in the public sector
- analyse the role of HRM/D as a managerial activity, while appreciating institutional and cultural constraints
- apply the main features of HRM/D to the public sector of developing and transitional countries with an understanding of its weaknesses and limitations.