

LAUNCH A CAREER IN HUMAN RESOURCES

FOUR STEPS TO SUCCESS



75TH ANNIVERSARY



BETTER WORKPLACES
BETTER WORLD™

INTRODUCTION

Managing and motivating people to do their best—the essence of human resource management—is a key to business success. Additionally, people management strategies are constantly changing, making the choice to pursue a career in human resources (HR) more exciting than ever.

People who work in HR inspire employees to do their best work, even as the world of work is changing. Not long ago, we started businesses in areas rich with the materials needed to produce goods, and we hired and trained people from the neighborhood. Today, even the smallest business has a Facebook page and could have employees across the world. This shift from local to global has affected every aspect of our lives,

but none as much as work itself. Today, employers can find and hire people from across the world to work remotely, and e-learning has made professional development opportunities available on demand. These business opportunities come with unprecedented challenges, such as:

- How much do you pay workers in Indonesia?
- How many hours is a standard workweek in France?
- What cultural challenges will domestic employees face when collaborating with co-workers in Asia?
- How many employees will we need in five years to meet our long-term business goals, and what kind of skills must they have?

If these questions intrigue you, a career in HR may help you find the answers.

Pursuing a career in HR—or any profession, for that matter—takes careful planning. With that in mind, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) has developed a career path to help you launch your HR career:

STEP 1 Get an HR education and cap it off by passing the SHRM-CP exam.

STEP 2 Use internships and other real-world work experiences to your advantage.

STEP 3 Find that first HR job.

STEP 4 Get ready to advance your career.



STEP 1:

GET AN HR EDUCATION AND CAP IT OFF BY PASSING THE SHRM-CP EXAM

BACHELOR'S DEGREE REQUIRED

It is possible (although rare) to find an entry-level job in the HR field without an undergraduate degree, but job advancement will be extremely limited without it. Job sites like SHRM HR Jobs, Indeed.com and LinkedIn are great places to find entry-level HR job listings.

HOW SHRM CAN HELP: FINDING YOUR HR DEGREE PROGRAM

SHRM has looked at hundreds of undergraduate and graduate HR degree programs to ensure they meet the recognized standards for HR content. These programs are listed on the SHRM website under Learning, HR Program Directory. The list is continually updated, so check it often as you plan your HR career to ensure that your targeted college's or university's HR major meets the curriculum standards.

FIND AN ADVISOR

As you go deeper into your HR studies, you will begin to realize how extensive the field is and how many career paths you can take. For example, you can become an HR generalist (meaning that you work in all the different HR areas—a position often found in smaller to medium-size companies) or focus on a specific area such as training and development, compensation and benefits, or staffing and recruiting. Deciding which route to take can become confusing, so seek out an advisor who can help you clarify your strengths and interests early in the process.

HOW SHRM CAN HELP: WHAT COURSES YOU SHOULD TAKE?

Over time, schools have developed their HR majors independently, resulting in a wide variety of “HR” degrees. SHRM defined what those courses should be, so you should take the initiative to examine the curricula of the schools you may attend to see if they include the necessary classes.

Students pursuing an undergraduate HR degree should expect to study the following required HR topics*:

- Organizational context of HR
- Managing compensation and benefits
- Employee relations
- Global human resource management (HRM)
- Human resource information systems (HRIS)
- Labor relations and unionized work environments
- Metrics and measurement
- Performance management
- Staffing: recruitment and selection
- Strategic HR
- Training and development
- Workforce planning and talent management
- Workplace health, safety and security

**Note that some of the topics listed will be combined into a single course.*

In addition to these courses, students pursuing a master’s degree in HR should take courses on change management.

For more information about HR curriculum, see the SHRM Human Resource Curriculum Guidebook and Templates.

MAKE GRADUATION A PRIORITY

Only 64 percent of college students will earn their degree—and it will take six years to do so. Today, most students work while taking college courses, and not surprisingly, money is a significant reason why they drop out before they earn their degree. However, don’t give up. If you find yourself needing to step away from your studies, keep “completing my degree” a high priority. It may take more time, but it will be worth it in the long run.

APPLY TO TAKE THE SHRM-CP

Thousands of students graduate with HR degrees each year, and while the HR job market is robust, competition is stiff. Because the content of HR studies varies among schools, if you are serious about entering the field, you should take the SHRM-CP certification exam. Earning your credential will show employers that you have the HR knowledge they want for their organization.

HOW SHRM CAN HELP: BECOME A STUDENT MEMBER TODAY

Joining SHRM as a student member and getting involved with your school’s student chapter, if there is one, is a great way to learn more about the HR field and to participate in activities that will help you in your career. A SHRM student membership gives you access to career mentors, scholarships and grants, and specialty programming at SHRM conferences, just to name a few. To learn more about the SHRM programs for students, visit the students webpage on the SHRM website.

STEP 2:

USE INTERNSHIPS AND OTHER REAL-WORLD WORK EXPERIENCES TO YOUR ADVANTAGE

THE INTERNSHIP EDGE

Gaining work experience through internships will give you a more complete picture of “a day in the life” of an HR professional. An internship will also add practical work experience to your resume and give you an edge when you begin your job search. In fact, a recent survey found that 70 percent of U.S. interns are hired by the same company they interned with. The importance of having real-world, HR-related work experience cannot be overstated, as demonstrated by a recent SHRM survey that found 76 percent of HR practitioners require between one and five years of HR-related work experience to secure an entry-level HR job.

Real-world experience doesn’t stop at internships



There are other ways to gain hands-on HR experience. Here are just a few:

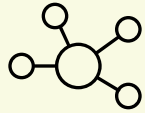
- If you are interested in HR theory, work with your professors on HR-related research projects.
- Participate in HR-related student conferences and competitions. SHRM offers regional and national conferences for which SHRM student members receive discounted registration.
- Network with other HR students by becoming a SHRM student member and joining your college’s or university’s SHRM student chapter. Be sure to take advantage of your student chapter’s proximity to a local professional chapter or state council to expand your network of HR professionals.

Internships and other hands-on learning experiences are not only great resume boosters—they’re great confidence boosters that can help ease your transition from being a student to being a professional.

STEP 3:

FIND THAT FIRST HR JOB

Getting that first job in HR can be daunting, but the steps you have taken so far—studying HR and obtaining your degree, taking the SHRM-CP certification exam and participating in internships—will give you a definite advantage over your peers. **Yet, there are other avenues you can take that may help you even more:**



**NETWORK
WITH HR
PROFESSIONALS.**



**USE SOCIAL MEDIA
TO YOUR
ADVANTAGE.**

Social media (such as Twitter, LinkedIn and Facebook) can be an effective tool in your job search. You can use it to connect with other students and professionals, to search for job opportunities, and to research potential employers.

HOW SHRM CAN HELP: BECOME A PROFESSIONAL MEMBER

Convert your SHRM student membership to professional membership status as soon as possible after graduation. SHRM offers student members a transitional membership at half the price of traditional professional membership. Seek out a local SHRM chapter to network with professionals already established in the field. Attend the chapter's monthly meetings and talk to members about your passion for HR. Discuss with them about your internships and your involvement in SHRM as a student member. Seek out a mentor in the chapter who may help you on your career path. Consider volunteering—it is a wonderful way to meet people and to demonstrate your work ethic and abilities.

STEP 4:

GET READY TO ADVANCE YOUR CAREER

THE CONSTANT EVOLUTION OF HR

The workplace has evolved from a top-down, need-to-know environment to one that is rich with communication and cultural diversity. With these changes come adjustments in the way we will effectively manage people in the future. HR will continue to evolve, and you must be prepared to change with it. Your education in the field will not stop with your degree.

HOW SHRM CAN HELP ADVANCE YOUR CAREER

SHRM has an extensive online presence that features HR news, offers a monthly magazine, and hosts regional, national and international conferences to help you stay up-to-date with changes in the field. Some local chapters host monthly lunches that often feature guest speakers with expertise in the HR field. SHRM also offers an increasing number of virtual learning opportunities such as Web-based conferences, webcasts and e-learning courses. Getting involved early to continue your education in the field will demonstrate to your employer (and potential employers) that you are dedicated to the profession.

TOMORROW'S HR COMPETENCIES

SHRM recently published the Body of Applied Skills and Knowledge™ (SHRM BASK™) to represent the evolution of the SHRM Competency Model. The SHRM BASK further defines knowledge areas and behavioral competencies. Knowledge is what you learned in school: those concepts, principles and information you learned about a particular subject. Competence is the application of that knowledge. It is about the skills you have developed and how well you use them to apply the knowledge. Behavior-based competencies—such as ethical practices, effective communication, the ability to serve effectively in a consultative role, knowledge and the ability to handle global and cultural differences, organizational leadership, and business acumen—are prominently featured.



SHRM member benefits will prepare you for a rewarding career in human resources. As a student member, you can apply to take the SHRM-CP certification exam at a discounted rate, so you can earn your certification before entering the workforce. On your breaks, or even during the semester, use this time to gain hands-on experience in the field through internships or part-time jobs. Having an undergraduate degree and experience in HR will assist your job search after graduation. You can use the HRJobs.com jobs board or other resources provided to SHRM members to get exclusive access to HR jobs around the world. Once you land your first job, consider becoming a professional member of SHRM to further network with peers in your area and stay up-to-date on the changing workplace dynamics.

**Now you are ready to begin the process
of becoming an HR professional.**

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