

TOPIC: HUMAN RESOURCES AND POLICIES

SUMMARY:

One of the first departments you will interact with at a new job is the human resource department (HR). This department is responsible for hiring, training, compensation, benefits, performance evaluations, complaints, promotions, and changes in your work status. Apart from the boss, the human resource department is an employee's primary link to the employer. The purpose of this chapter is to share common policies and resources that are accessed through the human resource department. Being informed and utilizing the resources provided by this department makes you a more productive and valued employee.

OTHER RESOURCES:

POTENTIAL GUEST SPEAKERS

- Invite a UNION OFFICIAL to explain unions and provide students with a sample union contract to review.
- Invite a HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER to provide an overview of his or her company's employee orientation program and/or review a sample of its employee handbook.

POTENTIAL FIELD TRIPS

- Visit a HUMAN RESOURCES DEPARTMENT to meet key individuals and have them briefly explain their job functions and how these functions benefit employees.
- Visit a DEPARTMENT STORE (or thrift store) to identify professional and appropriate work attire.

LEARNING OUTCOMES: *After studying these topics, you will benefit by:*

- Stating the purpose of and naming key services the human resource department provides employees
- Listing the primary elements of an employee orientation program
- Describing the purpose of an employee handbook
- Identifying the types of employee status and purpose of an introductory period
- Defining performance evaluations, their purpose, and explaining an employee's role in the process
- Providing a general overview of employee benefits
- Explaining the purpose of a union and its benefits

You are a successful student if you:

1. Explain common HR policies including employment-at-will and right to revise.
2. Describe specific considerations when selecting health-related benefits
3. Explain the responsibility employees have as union members

OVERVIEW OF EXERCISES AND ACTIVITIES

The following chart provides a quick overview of the activities for Human Resources and Policies. A complete description of each activity follows these tables. In the full description, you will find the activity title, instructions, and how to conclude/evaluate the activity. As you review which of these activities to use, consider the following:

- None of the activities are meant to be prescriptive. Pick, choose, and adapt. You know your students and what they need better than anyone else.
- We have denoted the format in which the activities can be used. Note the column below titled “Applications.” Most of the activities can be easily replicated from the classroom to the online environment. For example, reflection papers and case studies could be posted on discussion boards or chat rooms and students could respond there. Where appropriate, additional suggestions have been included in the activity section below.
- We have included all worksheets needed to complete the activities for this topic.
- You may want to suggest means by which your students can save, retrieve, and send their activities. This is usually determined by you and the LMS used at your institution.
- The activities provided for this module are intended to give you suggestions that may assist you in providing students with activities, journal writing, thought-provoking situations, and group activities. You probably have many activities in addition to the ones found here. Use them to your best advantage. You and your ideas bring the class to life.
- TALK IT OUTS are found throughout the chapters and are set up to be used as in-class activities or may be assigned for homework.
- ACTIVITIES are found at the end of each chapter and are set up to be used as homework (some may be used as in-class activities).
- SELF-QUIZ is used as a review of key terms.
- WEB SEARCHES are for added resources if computers are available.

Activity #	Description	Related Skill and/or Learning Outcome	Applications
Talk It Out	ID common questions employees have on first day of work	Employee orientation and services of HR function	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Topic Situation	Store and utilize employee handbook information. Recognize purpose for paid leave days.	Employee orientation, handbook, and benefits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Think Like A Boss	Uninformed employee Open door policy	Performance Open-door policy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online

Text Activity #1 Finding a Mentor	Identify individuals and a strategy for them to become a mentor	Mentoring	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Text Activity #2 Choosing Benefits	Select benefits	Employee benefits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Text Activity #3 Health-Care Considerations	Identify considerations when selecting a physician, hospital, dentist, eye doctor or pharmacist.	Employee benefits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Text Activity #4 Performance Criteria	ID elements for a performance eval related to target career	Performance evaluations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Text Activity #5 Job Description	Research target job descriptions	Performance evaluations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Text Activity #6 Right Fit	Research elements for a “right fit” for target company	Performance evaluations	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Text Activity #7 Health Care Considerations	Identify personal considerations when selecting a health plan	benefits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Writing Exercises	Additional exploration of orientations and unions	Employee benefits	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Web Search	Students should recognize the value of the frequently asked questions page on the Department of Labor website.	Employee rights and resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Additional Activity #1 Contracts and Manuals	Read examples of union contracts and employee manuals	Employee resources	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Additional Activity #2 Discussion Questions	Ideas for further discussion	All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online
Self-Quiz	Match key terms	All	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Traditional <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Hybrid or Blended <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Online

MyStudentSuccessLab ASSESSMENTS and ACTIVITIES

MyStudentSuccessLab (www.mystudentsuccesslab.com) is an online solution designed to help students acquire and develop the skills they need to succeed. Here students can access peer-led video presentations and develop core skills through interactive exercises and projects. Rich assessments based on Bloom's Taxonomy and tied to learning outcomes provide students with the opportunity to identify their strengths and weaknesses and to communicate them more effectively. MyStudentSuccessLab helps students develop academic, life, and career skills that will transfer to ANY course or experience.

TALK IT OUT

1. What are common questions employees have on their first day of work?

Most employees want to know about benefits, vacations/time off and paydays. Employees **NEED TO KNOW** where to go for various concerns and the employee handbook should always be stop one. Employees should also be aware of safety training, harassment policies, and other legally mandated issues presented in this chapter and the conflict chapter. If the organization is unionized, employees need to identify the shop steward and secure and read the union contract.

TOPIC SITUATION RESPONSE***1. What should Oliver do?***

In this scenario, Oliver attends his new employee orientation and then has questions. The topic response is to remember that many employee concerns are addressed in the employee handbook. Going directly to a manager for clarification conveys irresponsibility on the part of the employee. Students should always keep employee orientation materials (including the employee handbook) in a location for easy reference. They should also make the employee handbook stop one for any employee question. If they cannot find the answer to their concern, go to a manager and state that you first consulted the employee handbook.

2. What should Joseph do?

Joseph wants to take a mini-vacation and was contemplating taking a sick day or a paid leave day. Joseph should not call in sick because that would be a lie. It would not be responsible if he took a personal day so early on the job. If he took his personal leave day and needed it in the future for a valid reason it would not be available. Joseph needs to pass on the day at the cabin.

THINK LIKE A BOSS***1. How should you handle an employee who keeps asking you for information about major policies, vacations, and benefits?***

While it is important to always assist your employee, you must also teach him or her to be responsible. Respond with a comment such as, “Let’s refer to the employee handbook together and find the answer.” After several instances, hand the employee your copy and have him or her look up the answer, then offer to get him or her a new copy if the original has been misplaced. Questions that cannot be answered through the handbook can be referred to the HRM department.

2. How can a boss consistently communicate an open-door policy?

Successful bosses communicate an open-door policy by being present. They invite people into their offices and are receptive to comments. They probe for additional information if an employee is communicating a potential problem. Many bosses have a “code” for employees. If their door is open, anyone is welcome to enter. Office doors that are always closed communicate that the boss is not available to the employee.

Text Activity #1: Finding a Mentor (Exercise 8-1)

List an individual you would consider a mentor for you and why.

What can you do to gain this individual's attention and demonstrate that you would be a good investment of his or her time?

Students should include some of the traits mentioned such as someone who will help them succeed, someone that they can trust, someone who knows the company and industry and someone who is willing to take the time to help them.

Text Activity #2: Choosing Benefits (Exercise 8-2)

Assume you only qualify for four benefits from the following list. Which four would you choose and why?

Students are to choose only four benefits from the list available and explain why each one is important to them. Answers will vary. Because many college students do not have proper healthcare coverage, this exercise makes the student think about which benefits will be most needed both now and in the future. Challenge students to identify if and how their desired benefits would change if they became married, are single, or had children.

Benefit	Why Selected
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.
4.	4.

Text Activity #3: Benefit Considerations (*Exercise 8-3*)

What are important considerations for you and your dependents when choosing a physician, hospital, dentist, eye doctor, and pharmacy?

Students are to state their considerations when choosing health care. Answers may vary. Common considerations may include cost, distance from work or home, whether these providers are accepting new patients or accepting the company's health plan. Finally, quality and friendliness are always a consideration.

Text Activity #4: Performance Criteria (Activity 8-1)

Identify and discuss three typical areas that employers consider in performance evaluations.

Answers may include dependability, knowledge of product, customer sales, customer satisfaction, cleanliness of station or area, teamwork, and timeliness. Students should name at least three areas identified in a performance evaluation. Answers may vary; however, this activity helps the student identify common characteristics of successful employees (e.g., responsible, friendly, good team-member, finishes work on time, demonstrates quality). An excellent resource to provide students is <http://www.onetonline.org/>. Have students go to the top right corner and type in their target career job then view key duties. This will assist them in identifying appropriate criteria. A future discussion and formal presentation on ONet is provided in chapters 13-15.

1.
2.
3.

Text Activity #5: Job Description (Activity 8-2)

Research a job description for your target job. Identify common performance criteria for that specific job.

As with activity 8-1, have students visit <http://www.onetonline.org/> Have students go to the top right corner and type in their target career job then view key duties. This will assist them in identifying appropriate criteria. A future discussion and formal presentation on ONet is provided in chapters 13-15.

Text Activity #6: Right Fit (Activity 8-3)

How can a potential employee identify if he or she is a “right fit” for a specific company?

The term “a right fit” is frequently used, but few really know what it means. Have students research this term by identifying personalities and traits commonly required for their target job. Also have students research target companies, corporate cultures, daily responsibilities, employees who work in the target position. Many students fail to fully research common duties of their target job. Having a clear picture of daily activities will ensure students select the right career that truly makes them excited.

Text Activity #7: Health Care Considerations (Activity 8-4)

Assume you are now eligible for health benefits and must choose specific health-care providers. Identify a local physician, eye doctor, dentist, and hospital that you would utilize. Why did you select these providers? How did you go about selecting them?

Answers may vary. This activity takes the in-chapter exercise to the next level by identifying specific providers. Ask students how they identified and decided upon specific providers.

	NAME	WHY SELECTED	HOW SELECTED
Physician			
Eye doctor			
Dentist			
Hospital			

WRITING EXERCISES

1. Design a four-hour employee orientation program. Identify what information would be included, who would present, and how much time would be allotted to each presentation.
2. With some research, identify three benefits and three drawbacks to joining a union.

Additional Activity #1: Contracts and Manuals

Secure copies of union contracts and/or employee manuals for students to view.

Additional Activity #2: Discussion Questions

1. Discuss the importance of the employee handbook.
2. Discuss the pros and cons of getting paid more money vs. getting medical and dental benefits.
3. Discuss the pros and cons of being part of a union.
4. As a new employee, what would be a good question to ask during a company-wide orientation?
5. As a new employee, what would be a good question to ask during a department-specific orientation?

WEB SEARCH

Find answers to questions on various labor topics by exploring the Frequently Asked Questions page on the U.S. Department of Labor website. The URL is <https://webapps.dol.gov/dolfaq/dolfaq.asp>. Encourage students to look up the Department of Labor site specific to your state. You will enjoy seeing how excited students are to find this resource that is very applicable to them.

Self-Quiz

Matching Key Terms: *In the blank column match the key term to the definition using the identifying number.*

Key Term	Answer	Definition
Bargaining agreement		1. A formal document provided by the company that outlines an employee's agreement with the employer regarding work conditions, policies, and benefits
Corporate culture		2. Employment status for employees who have varied work hours and normally do not qualify for employer benefits.
Dental benefits		3. A third-party organization that protects the rights of employees and represents employee interests to an employer
Employee handbook		4. A formal appraisal that measures an employee's work performance
Employee orientation		5. Values, expectations, and behavior of people at work; the company's personality reflected through employees' behavior
Employment-at-will		6. An employment status for employees who work a pre-determined number of hours per week and are eligible for employer benefits.
Full-time employee		7. An employee who is hired only for a specified period of time, typically to assist with busy work periods or to temporarily replace an employee on leave
Human resource department		8. Insurance coverage for teeth
Introductory period		9. A statement contained in many employee handbooks that provides an employer the opportunity to change or revise existing policies
Job description		10. Insurance coverage for vision (eye) care
Medical benefits		11. Communicates to employees that management and the human resource department is available to listen should the employee need to discuss a workplace concern
Mentor		12. Insurance coverage for physician and hospital visits
Open-door policy		13. Typically the first one to three months of employment when employers evaluate a new hire's performance and determine if the new hire should continue as an employee (also known as probation and orientation period)
Part-time employee		14. Policies that do not contractually obligate employees to work for the company for a specified period
Performance evaluation		15. Someone who can help an employee learn more about his or her present position, provide support, and help develop the employee's career
Retirement plan		16. A document that outlines specific job duties and responsibilities for a specific position
Right to revise		17. A savings plan for when an employee permanently leaves the workforce
Temporary		18. A department responsible for hiring, training, compensation,

employee		benefits, performance evaluations, complaints, promotions, and changes in work status
Union		19. A time when a company provides new employees important information including the company's purpose, structure, major policies, procedures, benefits, and other matters
Vision benefits		20. A contract between an employer and a union that addresses salaries, benefits, working conditions, and other common employee matters

Self-Quiz Answer Key

Key Term	Answer	Definition
Bargaining agreement	20	1. A formal document provided by the company that outlines an employee's agreement with the employer regarding work conditions, policies, and benefits
Corporate culture	5	2. Employment status for employees who have varied work hours and normally do not qualify for employer benefits.
Dental benefits	8	3. A third-party organization that protects the rights of employees and represents employee interests to an employer
Employee handbook	1	4. A formal appraisal that measures an employee's work performance
Employee orientation	19	5. Values, expectations, and behavior of people at work; the company's personality reflected through employees' behavior
Employment-at-will	14	6. An employment status for employees who work a pre-determined number of hours per week and are eligible for employer benefits.
Full-time employee	6	7. An employee who is hired only for a specified period of time, typically to assist with busy work periods or to temporarily replace an employee on leave
Human resource department	18	8. Insurance coverage for teeth
Introductory period	13	9. A statement contained in many employee handbooks that provides an employer the opportunity to change or revise existing policies
Job description	16	10. Insurance coverage for vision (eye) care
Medical benefits	12	11. Communicates to employees that management and the human resource department is available to listen should the employee need to discuss a workplace concern
Mentor	15	12. Insurance coverage for physician and hospital visits
Open-door policy	11	13. Typically the first one to three months of employment when employers evaluate a new hire's performance and determine if the new hire should continue as an employee (also known

		as probation and orientation period)
Part-time employee	2	14. Policies that do not contractually obligate employees to work for the company for a specified period
Performance evaluation	4	15. Someone who can help an employee learn more about his or her present position, provide support, and help develop the employee's career
Retirement plan	17	16. A document that outlines specific job duties and responsibilities for a specific position
Right to revise	9	17. A savings plan for when an employee permanently leaves the workforce
Temporary employee	7	18. A department responsible for hiring, training, compensation, benefits, performance evaluations, complaints, promotions, and changes in work status
Union	3	19. A time when a company provides new employees important information including the company's purpose, structure, major policies, procedures, benefits, and other matters
Vision benefits	10	20. A contract between an employer and a union that addresses salaries, benefits, working conditions, and other common employee matters

**HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
ASSIGNMENT SHEET**

Assignment	Points	Notes
Read Chapter		
Exercise 8-1		
Exercise 8-2		
Exercise 8-3		
Topic Situation: Employee handbook		
Topic Situation: Personal Day		
Self-Quiz		
Think Like A Boss #1		
Think Like A Boss #2		
Activity 8-1		
Activity 8-2		
Activity 8-3		
Activity 8-4:		