The purpose of Human Resource Management is to mobilize people. However, this is not a straightforward process considering the ever changing social and organizational environment in which contemporary HRM performance accounts for a variety of challenges such as employee development, staffing, performance and diversity. Our HRM programme aims to help students develop skills and competencies needed to mobilize employees in contemporary organizations.

The programme is about

Area of interest
The philosophy of our program is to focus on HRM in a contemporary perspective, thereby explicitly highlighting the changing HRM environment. This changing environment is characterized by an increasing emphasis on innovation, proactivity, and multidisciplinary analysis, propelled by key societal and organizational changes such as increasing flexibility of work, changing employer-employee relationships, digitalization, and international mobility of staff. Our philosophy implies that the current HRM environment impacts all HR-related processes. In this programme we focus specifically on four key processes: employee development, staffing, performance, and diversity. These processes subsequently link to our courses, and will be integrated throughout the program, thereby creating a multidisciplinary approach to studying HRM.

You are in the right programme if your interest is triggered by questions such as: "What are key characteristics of the changing HRM environment and how does this impact individuals and organizations?" "Can we improve HRM processes of our organizations?" "How can innovative staffing methods contribute to organizational innovation?" and "What is the role of HR analytics and big data in making HRM more evidence-based?"

Core methodology
We believe that the contemporary HRM environment can only be fully grasped by openness about multiple research philosophies, as this will help to better understand and examine today’s complex business challenges. Therefore, we use a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods, using scientific literature, practical cases, and qualitative data to learn about HRM-related topics. Throughout the programme, we will attempt to bridge the gap between science and practice as effectively as possible, for example by organizing assignments in cooperation with and at organizations, by having guest speakers come over to the VU, and by learning how to systematically analyse practical problems. As teachers in this programme, we apply the principle of co-teaching, which means that each course will be coordinated by at least two HRM staff members, who are complementary in expertise. We believe this makes our teaching of higher quality and more innovative, and it will allow students to enjoy double the experience from their teaching staff.

Target group
Students of the HRM Master programme are curious and open-minded, and they come from a variety of cultural backgrounds. Half of our students typically are from international backgrounds. Prior education is not restricted to Business programs, as HRM is a multidisciplinary field that can be analysed from different perspectives. In general, this program is mostly suited for students who have completed a Bachelor’s degree in Social Sciences, Business, Psychology, or other related disciplines. In addition, if you are interested in joining the program but have a different educational background, you are welcome to apply and we will decide based on your profile whether admission to the program is feasible.

Challenge to distinguish
Our programme allows you to distinguish yourself through several ways. First, there is an honours programme that you can register for, which will provide you with extra learning opportunities and a formal distinction. Second, there is the possibility of doing additional courses during the programme, thereby allowing you to specialize (i.e., focus on HRM) and generalize (i.e., explore other disciplines) during your Master's programme.

Master’s relevance
Apiritional job (far future)
This program aims to develop the captains of industry of the future, including HR managers, HR business partners, and HR strategic partners. In addition, our programme could lead you to become CEO or successful entrepreneur with strong knowledge of human behaviour in organizations.

Professional
Experts on human behaviour in organizations are crucial everywhere as they hold the key to a productive organization. After finishing this Master’s programme, you will be an expert who is able to optimize the human capital in organizations. The programme specifically focuses on this by incorporating case studies and actual problems from companies, and emphasising your skills throughout the programme. This will help you to develop practical but theoretically informed solutions, and thereby enhance your skills as a career-thinking “reflective professional”.

Citizen
With the rise of issues such as sustainable employability, digitalization and diversification, and corporate social responsibility, it is clear that the world is rapidly changing for everyone. Becoming an expert in human resources enables you to make a difference in society, thereby enhancing your role as a citizen in today’s labour market and society.

Learning goals and how the programme is designed

Learning goals
1. Have the advanced and original academic and research skills to contribute to the body of knowledge
2. Have thorough knowledge of relevant theory and methods
3. Have an academic approach to solving complex (business/economic) problems
4. Have the professional social skills to interact with other professionals
5. Have an horizon beyond the professional area
6. Are self-reflexive professionals

How the programme is designed
We help students to develop necessary competencies to solve practical HRM issues and challenges based on theoretical arguments. Throughout the programme, students learn to review and analyze critically the state of the art research related to human resource management to get acquainted to the contemporary debate in the field. In addition, students will contribute to the field of HRM by writing an innovative Master thesis with individual, organizational, and societal impact.

This programme will cover the core concepts and theories of all the basic HRM activities in organizations, such as recruitment & selection, training & development, and performance management. In addition, these theories and practices will consistently be analysed in their context. Finally, the programme will explicitly feature the changing HRM environment as a core theme. Both quantitative (e.g., surveys) and qualitative methods are used in this programme. To deepen their knowledge, students can additionally choose from several electives that each are strongly related to deepening student’s ability to act in response to strategic and organizational challenges.

One of the core processes this programme focuses on is diversity. This process entails becoming more aware and appreciative of all kinds of diversity issues in organizations and society, thereby helping you to develop a broader horizon, and the role that HRM can play in such issues. In addition, we also explicitly includes ethics as an essential focus of the programme. The courses in the HRM programme will consistently search for links between science and practice through on-site visits, guest lectures, and assignments aimed to bridge the gap between science and practice. We will focus on theoretical and systematic analyses of problems as the foundation for confronting with fresh perspectives and innovative solutions. Finally, to build a critical and reflective professional, this will be practiced during team-based presentations with your peers and with invited managers that assess your performance and provide valuable feedback. Working in teams and performing assignments in and out of class will be core activities throughout the HRM programme. These activities will improve professional social skills both as a student and as a future professional. This contributes to the development of so-called ‘soft skills’, which are crucial in today’s labour market, as core outcomes in our programme.

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Community
The HRM programme features many social and professional activities that you can be part of. We aim to form a strong community that will help you during your studies and afterwards. In terms of professional activities, we start each academic year with a formal introduction during which you will meet your fellow students and be introduced to the faculty members that you will work with during the programme. In addition, we organize an alumni event at the start of the year, during which (recent) alumni from the VU HRM Master programme will join you to discuss their experiences during their studies and in finding their dream job. In which job? Our goal is to support you as much as possible in preparing for your future in the labor market. The programme includes other activities as part of our community as well, such as a LinkedIn group that features alumni and current students, our student organization Auros that organizes interesting meetings, and a graduation ceremony at the end of year during which we celebrate your successes.