

**POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA:
STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



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Why has the new PGDip in Strategic HRM been developed?

The new Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic Human Resource Management developed by Stellenbosch University focuses on the strategic competencies of HR leaders in delivering business value in pursuit of the overall business goals of an organisation. The programme has been designed with inputs from top HR Directors, business executives and thought leaders, thereby ensuring a cutting-edge approach to HR best practices aligned to the realities and complexities of the new world of work. The PG Diploma offers a development opportunity to graduates in any field seeking to augment their qualifications with core HR Management knowledge and skills as well as to examine the strategic application of the HR function in organisations. The introduction of this postgraduate qualification will also facilitate the upward career mobility of middle managers in various disciplines requiring people management skills and to enable people managers to apply strategic HRM competencies.

The new PGDip builds on the current undergraduate programmes in HR Management and Industrial Psychology offered by Stellenbosch University. A market analysis has shown that there is a big need in the market for senior HR officers and line managers to develop Strategic Human Resource Management competencies in driving the successful execution of business strategy. This programme is strategic in its approach and therefore prepares HR Managers for senior and top management positions with entry to gain access to the boards of companies.



How does Strategic Human Resource Management differ from Human Resource Management?

In the past, human resource (HR) departments have focused primarily on the functional aspects of HR Management, such as recruitment and selection, training and development and employment relations. In recent times, HR has become strategic when management teams and boards have decided to position people at the centre of business success, thus HR has become strategic in contributing directly to the achievement of business goals. This programme aligns the current body of knowledge (scientific evidence) with Strategic HR Management Standards and Competencies developed by the HR professional and quality assurance body of South Africa, the SA Board for People Practices (SABPP). In fact, SABPP identified Strategic HR Management as the first national HR Standard, and it is also positioned right at the top of the National HR Competency model, hence clearly highlighting the need for HR Professionals and HR Managers to invest in their strategic HR Management competence. In essence, this programme strengthens the link between theory and practice by addressing all those strategic areas, such as HR Strategy, Talent Management, Reward and Recognition and HR Metrics.



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How does this programme differ from other typical HR qualifications?

The field of HR Management has grown to such an extent that almost all universities now offer HR Management programmes, but not all of them address the strategic side of HR Management culminating in a full qualification. In most existing programmes Strategic HR Management is a module as part of a main qualification in Industrial Psychology or HR Management. Although some business schools have offered executive development programmes in Strategic HR Management as short courses, this programme offered by Stellenbosch University covers the full spectrum of Strategic HR Management practice anchored in evidence-based management as a means of attaining knowledge. This enables the HR Manager to operate at a strategic level together with the senior or top management at a company. In the event of an HR Director the expectation is to function as a fully-fledged board member participating in overall decision-making and corporate governance functions at the highest level of a company. In addition, all line managers responsible for other departments, such as finance, supply chain or production are managers of people and this programme can also help them to develop strategic people management skills, such as building a sound organisation culture and developing people strategies for a business. Human capital is now formally accepted in the business world as one of the six capitals of business, therefore companies must report on their human capital in their annual integrated reports.



What are the benefits of studying the PGDip in Strategic HR Management?

The benefits of studying for the new PGDip and the unique value proposition of the programme are as follows:

- Its focus is strategic in ensuring that HR work is elevated to the strategic and board level in organisations by driving effective business strategy;
- HR practitioners and People Managers are provided with an opportunity for career advancement and professional higher education development at NQF level 8;
- Using multiple sources of scientific evidence, global, emerging market and local HR best practices are integrated into the programme from a future world of work perspective;
- Individual and group online learning accelerates the learning and networking experience;
- All outcomes are applied in the workplace and culminate in clear outputs relevant to the workplace and presented and signed-off by a panel of experts;
- The content and outcomes of the different modules are evidence-based and cover global best practices in HR Management, while also meeting the national HR standards and competencies of the SA Board for People Practices (SABPP);
- An integrated assessment ensures that students obtain competence in the eight modules in an integrated manner.



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In view of the above, depending on the seniority of the students in terms of the level of their work experience and qualifications, applicants may also qualify to be registered as HR professionals with the SABPP, and are therefore also eligible to qualify for admission as Ex-officio Commissioners of Oaths via the SABPP.



Are the latest HR trends and best practices covered in the programme?

Yes, the programme focuses on the latest developments in the science and practice of Strategic HR Management, such as HR Governance, HR Risk Management, HR Ethics, Future of Work, Digital HR, Talent Management, Employment Value Proposition, Employer Branding, People Analytics, Employee Experience, Global HR and People Strategy. These best practices have been incorporated in the eight modules, in such a way that it prepares students for Leadership and Board roles in aligning all strategic HR work to the Fourth Industrial Revolution by creating innovative high-performance organisation cultures. Ultimately, students are guided in measuring and demonstrating the bottom-line impact of HR as disclosed in the integrated reports of companies. While each module starts with learning outcomes from an educational perspective, they are converted to explicit workplace outputs such as the development of an HR strategy or an Employment Value Proposition Statement that students can implement and take back to their organisations.



What is the NQF level of the programme?

Accredited at NQF level 8, the PGDip blends theory with practice and bridges the divide between the academic rigor expected in an undergraduate degree and the high-level rigor of a master's degree. Students will earn a total of 120 credits on the NQF level 8 (15 credits per module).



What are the articulation possibilities of the programme?

To articulate to a master's degree in HR Management, the module Research Methodology as well as a formal Research Project similar to the current honours degree programme will be required. Students can enrol as a special student for these modules and complete it in one year.



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What is the approach to programme delivery and assessment?

The Postgraduate Diploma in Strategic HR Management will be a programme delivered in the hybrid learning mode, consisting of shorter periods of on-campus (face-to-face) teaching and learning supplemented with sustained periods of fully online learning. There are 8 direct contact hours of classes per module (1 day per module), for the block of introductory contact time (the introductory contact block at the start of the course for full time students is 5 days and for part-time students 3 days). Students will be required to have online contact and to do independent self-study, assignments and application in a work environment. Information and communication technology mediated lectures and discussion groups will be employed to facilitate the learning experience for students. There are thus 5 days of on-campus classes for semester 1 and 4 days of on-campus classes for semester 2, with the remainder of the contact to be facilitated online.



Who is the target market for the programme?

The programme target four market segments:

1. HR Practitioners who are interested to progress to HR Managers;
2. HR Managers who are aspiring to become HR Directors;
3. HR Directors who are keen to update their HR knowledge;
4. Line Managers and other senior business specialists who want to improve their people management skills.



Is it possible to enrol for the programme if you are from outside South Africa?

Given the fact that a hybrid learning approach is used, students from all provinces in South Africa and other countries are most welcome to enrol for the programme. However, to gain maximum benefit, they are also required to attend the face-to-face sessions, and then to continue with online learning from their home countries. Candidates with non-South African qualifications are required to obtain a recognition certificate from the South African Qualifications Authority to confirm the equivalent status of their qualifications.

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What are the modules of the programme?

The PGDip Strategic Human Resource Management consists of the following 8 modules, and its purpose and explicit workplace outputs are outlined below:

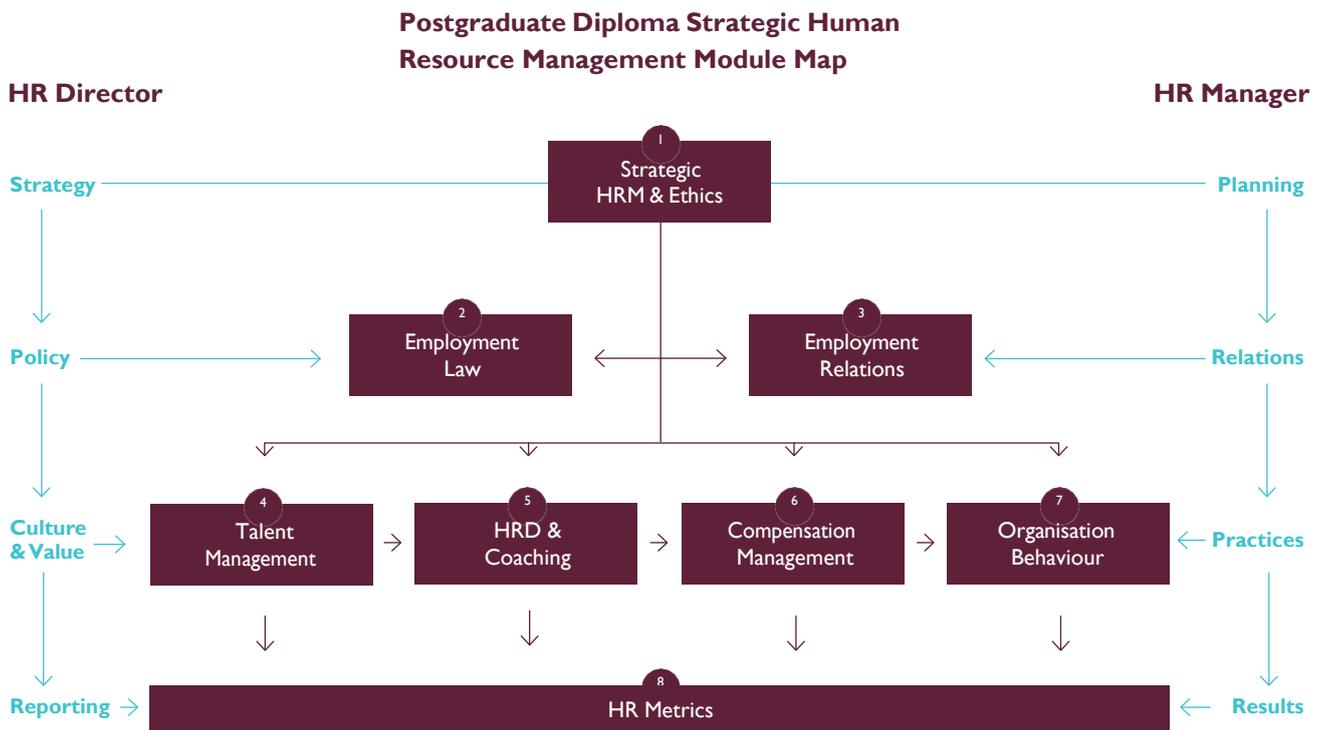
MODULES	PURPOSE	OUTPUTS
1. Strategic HR Management & Ethics	To develop a Strategic HR Plan for an organisation driven by stakeholder needs and sound HR governance.	HR Strategy and Plan HR Risk Register and Plan Ethics and Governance Plan
2. Talent Management	To develop a dynamic and futuristic talent strategy for an organisation.	Talent Management Strategy Succession Plan
3. Strategic HR Development and Coaching	To ensure that learning and development and coaching contribute strategically to business success.	Learning & Development Strategy Coaching Plan
4. Organisation Behaviour	To optimise the science and practice of organisation behaviour in building a high-performance culture.	Organisation Culture Strategy
5. Compensation	To apply the latest reward best practices and remuneration governance in optimising employee and business performance.	Remuneration Report
6. Employment law	To ensure compliance to all 25 HR and ER related laws in South Africa by managing risks for employers, while promoting the sound governance of HR in balancing stakeholder needs. International students to identify ER related laws in their respective countries.	Employment law compliance and risk audit report
7. Employment Relations	To leverage the employment relationship in creating a productive work environment for optimal employee and business performance.	Employment relations strategy
8. HR Metrics	To measure the business impact of HR within a sound people analytics and HR metrics framework for organisations.	People Analytics Strategy Human Capital Scorecard HR part of integrated report

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How do the different modules contribute to the overall programme?

The PGDip has been developed to build the strategic HR competence of students in an integrated way (see module map below). The different modules link to one another in terms of the roles of the HR Director focusing on Strategy, Policy (Governance, Risk and Compliance), Organisational Culture and value, and Reporting on the one hand; and the role of the HR Manager or Line Manager as a People Manager in terms of Planning, Relations, Practices and Results on the other hand. Thus, not only do the modules develop a high level of strategic competence, they also focus on eliminating the strategy-execution gap by ensuring that strategies are operationalised at a process and practices level.





What is the admission requirements for access to the PGDip?

A first degree or Advance Diploma at NQF level 7 or equivalent in any field.

An average of 55% for your final-year modules.

Three years' work experience in HR or people management responsibility in a line management position.

Access to the internet for online learning.



How will the online learning component contribute to the delivery of the programme?

Leveraging the Stellenbosch University approach to hybrid learning, the online component has specifically been designed around the needs of working students. The online learning mode ensures that flexibility is embedded in the delivery and assessment of the programme and therefore presents two unique benefits for students:

(1) They can balance their work, family and study commitments by engaging with the online platform and other students, as well as their lecturers at any time.

(2) HR Practitioners, and Learning & Development Managers in particular, are also responsible for implementing online learning at their companies, and this programme will therefore enable them to refine their online learning skills and empower them further to drive and implement online learning at their own companies.



What is the duration of the programme?

A unique feature of the programme is its flexibility. Students can select the option of completing the programme over one year, or two years if they so wish. Students can decide whether they want to enroll for all eight modules in one year, spread over two semesters (referred to as full-time), or if they want to stagger it over two years by completing four modules a year (part-time), thereby accommodating students with different needs, commitments and workloads. Given the fact that all students are employed full-time in HR and other people management positions, they will therefore balance their studies with their work programme. Information and communication technology mediated lectures and discussion groups will be employed to facilitate the learning experience for students, while being connected to all other students via the online platform.



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How will Covid-19 or the lockdown impact on the programme?

The current or future extended lockdowns will have little or no effect on the course, as the contact sessions will be converted to online sessions that will seamlessly integrate with the work already put in throughout the year in pioneering online learning. In view of the fact that HR Managers play a key role to manage Covid-19 in the workplace, a special section on Covid-19 management has been included as part of the learning unit on HR Risk Management in the Strategic HR Management module. Moreover, the Future of Work learning unit covers typical Covid-19 friendly workplace programmes, such as working from home policies, flexible work arrangements, as well as Digital HR Management. This will ensure that students are also enabled to manage the “new normal” as part of their future workplace programmes, in addition to focusing on the health, safety and employee wellbeing imperatives pertaining to the Covid-19 crisis.



When is the closing date for applications?

South African students must apply by 30 October of the year before their intended studies and international students by 01 October.



What is the cost of the programme?

A detailed quotation can be requested at www.maties.com



What is the process of application?

Students must apply via the overall university administration (www.sun.ac.za),
For more information contact the Course Administrator,
Rahkeenah Peters on (021) 808 3012 or indpsych@sun.ac.za
Or visit the website at www.sun.ac.za/industrialpsychology



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