

## LCBB5012 – PRINCIPLES OF HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

### Assessment Component 1: Academic Interview for HR Processes

Student Name: Mohammad shakil

Student ID: 2416380

Module Code: LCBB5012

Assignment Title: Academic Interview – Innovation Support Officer

Date of submission

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

This assessment responds directly to the conference theme that modern work is being reshaped by digitisation and automation — examples include ATMs replacing bank tellers and self-service systems replacing receptionists. As routine, rule-based work is increasingly automated, human value shifts to creativity, problem-solving and adaptability (Bughin et al., 2019). The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD, 2024) confirms that innovation is no longer optional: it is a core driver of organisational survival and effectiveness.

HRM's strategic purpose is to align people capability with organisational goals across national and international contexts (Truss et al., 2021). For UWTSD Students' Union, this means moving beyond recruiting only for administrative reliability, and instead designing roles, recruitment criteria and development pathways that build and reward an innovative mindset. This submission presents a full Job Description, Person Specification and interview preparation for the newly created Innovation Support Officer, explaining how the role supports HR functions, responds to institutional and environmental factors, and meets Level 5 academic learning outcomes.

AI Use Statement: Generative AI was used only for research, structuring, and proofreading support. All content, argument, and final wording are independently created and owned by the student, in line with assessment rules.

#### 2. JOB DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Innovation Support Officer

Employer: - NovaTech Innovations UK – good for tech, digital services or engineering projects  
Hours: 37 hours per week; flexible working, occasional evening/weekend work with time-off-in-lieu

Contract Type: Fixed-term 12 months, extension subject to funding and performance

Reporting To: Head of Student Experience & Engagement

Salary: £24,000 – £26,500 per annum pro-rata

#### Job Context

Work is undergoing permanent technological change: automation and AI are steadily replacing repetitive, low-discretion tasks. Where HR previously prioritised accuracy, compliance and speed, it must now design work that enables employees to collaborate with technology rather than compete against it. This is particularly relevant in higher education, where student expectations, regulation and sustainability goals are also evolving rapidly. UWTSD Students' Union serves diverse learners across campuses and countries; it must adapt services to remain inclusive, accessible and efficient.

This role exists to embed innovation systematically, helping the Union turn digital disruption into improved student experience and organisational resilience.

### Main Purpose of the Role

To champion, coordinate and deliver innovation and digital transformation across the Students' Union; research and pilot new tools, agile workflows and service models; build a culture where experimentation and learning are valued; and work alongside HR to update recruitment, learning and development, and performance management practices — directly supporting strategic organisational objectives (Truss et al., 2021).

### Key Responsibilities

#### Innovation & Digital Transformation

- Map repetitive, manual and paper-heavy processes across membership, advice, events and administration; identify opportunities for automation, AI assistance, self-service portals and workflow redesign to reduce administrative burden and improve turnaround times.
- Research, benchmark and evaluate emerging technologies and working practices: collaborative platforms, data visualisation, low-code automation, virtual engagement tools and remote-first service delivery models.
- Apply structured innovation frameworks including Design Thinking, Agile and Lean Start-up to diagnose problems, co-design solutions with students and staff, run small-scale pilots, measure impact, refine and scale successful changes.
- Ensure all solutions meet the Equality Act 2010, UK GDPR and accessibility standards, and actively contribute to institutional sustainability targets through reduced travel, paperless working and lower carbon footprint.

#### Strategic & HR Alignment

- Monitor national and international trends in higher education, student unions and the third sector, analysing how factors such as the cost-of-living crisis, post-pandemic working patterns, net-zero policy and cross-cultural student needs shape service design.
- Provide HR with evidence-based recommendations to update job descriptions, person specifications and interview methods, so that “innovative mindset” is assessed fairly and consistently, not just described as a vague trait.
- Conduct skills-gap analysis across the workforce; design and deliver training resources to build digital literacy, creative problem-solving and change-leadership capability.
- Advise on flexible, inclusive HR policies that work across multi-campus and international contexts, avoiding rigid “one-size-fits-all” rules.

#### Culture & Engagement

- Deliver workshops, “innovation drop-ins” and peer-learning programmes to build confidence with new systems and demystify technology.
- Establish and manage a cross-campus “Innovation Hub” — online and in-person — where students and staff can submit, develop and test improvement ideas safely.

- Build partnerships with UWTSD academic schools, industry bodies, other students' unions and international HE networks to share learning and co-create transferable solutions.
- Model and promote a culture where calculated risk-taking is encouraged and learning from failure is framed as progress.

#### Project Management & Evaluation

- Plan, resource and manage innovation projects using recognised project management tools; document processes, create user guides and hand-over materials to ensure sustainability.
- Define and track clear KPIs: time saved per process, operational cost efficiency, student satisfaction scores, error reduction, adoption rates and environmental impact.
- Present findings and recommendations to the Senior Management Team and Student Council in clear, accessible formats to inform strategic decision-making.

#### Working Conditions

- Hybrid working model combining campus presence and remote work, with flexibility for care or study commitments.
- Occasional travel between UWTSD campuses, UK-wide conferences and international benchmarking visits.
- Proficiency in Microsoft 365/Google Workspace essential; willingness to learn and support others with new software and tools.
- Requires ability to work independently and lead cross-functional teams including HR, Finance, Marketing and Student Support.

### 3. PERSON SPECIFICATION

Role: Innovation Support Officer

Selection Criteria: Split into Essential (must have) and Desirable (advantageous), assessed via application form, interview and practical task.

Table

| Category                  | Essential Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | Desirable Criteria                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Knowledge & Understanding | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of digitisation, automation and AI trends and their impact on jobs and services (Bughin et al., 2019)</li> <li>• Working knowledge of UK GDPR / data protection and Equality Act 2010</li> <li>• Understanding of the role of students' unions and higher education landscape</li> <li>• Basic knowledge of sustainability and environmental responsibilities in the workplace</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Knowledge of CIPD professional standards / HRM principles</li> <li>• Understanding of agile, lean or design-thinking methodologies</li> <li>• Awareness of international HE and cross-cultural student service needs</li> </ul> |
| Skills & Abilities        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong analytical and critical-thinking skills: able to break down processes and</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of basic workflow mapping or automation tools</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                             |

|                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                          | spot improvement opportunities• Excellent written and verbal communication for technical and non-technical audiences• Proficient in standard office software; quick to learn new systems• Creative problem-solving: able to suggest realistic, low-risk innovations and explain trade-offs• Ability to plan small projects, manage time and meet deadlines                                                                                 | Experience delivering training, workshops or peer-learning sessions• Data literacy: able to use spreadsheets and simple visualisation to measure impact• Cross-cultural communication and facilitation skills                                                                                                                     |
| Experience                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of improving a process, system or service in education, charity, retail or similar environment</li> <li>• Experience working with diverse groups of people, including students, volunteers or customers</li> <li>• Evidence of working independently and as part of a team to achieve goals</li> </ul>                                                                                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience in students' unions, colleges or universities</li> <li>• Experience of hybrid or remote-first working environments</li> <li>• Track record of turning ideas into small-scale trials / pilots</li> <li>• Experience working with international students or partners</li> </ul> |
| Personal Attributes / Innovative Mindset | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curious and proactive: naturally asks "why?" and "how could this be easier/better?"</li> <li>• Resilient and reflective: treats setbacks as learning opportunities</li> <li>• Open to change and comfortable with ambiguity</li> <li>• Inclusive and student-centred: designs solutions for everyone, not just the majority</li> <li>• Committed to ethical and responsible innovation</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Experience of championing new ideas within an organisation</li> <li>• Willingness to experiment and share failures openly to build culture</li> <li>• Passionate about the role of technology in making education fairer and more accessible</li> </ul>                                  |

#### Category Essential Criteria Desirable Criteria

Knowledge & Understanding • Awareness of digitisation, automation and AI trends and their impact on jobs and services (Bughin et al., 2019) • Working knowledge of UK GDPR / data protection and Equality Act 2010 • Understanding of the role of students' unions and higher education landscape • Basic knowledge of sustainability and environmental responsibilities in the workplace • Knowledge of CIPD professional standards / HRM principles • Understanding of agile, lean or design-thinking methodologies • Awareness of international HE and cross-cultural student service needs

Skills & Abilities • Strong analytical and critical-thinking skills: able to break down processes and spot improvement opportunities • Excellent written and verbal communication for technical and non-technical audiences • Proficient in standard office software; quick to learn new systems • Creative problem-solving: able to suggest realistic, low-risk innovations and explain trade-offs • Ability to plan small projects, manage time and meet deadlines • Experience of basic workflow mapping or automation tools • Experience delivering training, workshops or peer-learning sessions • Data literacy: able to use spreadsheets and simple visualisation to measure impact • Cross-cultural communication and facilitation skills

Experience • Experience of improving a process, system or service in education, charity, retail or similar environment • Experience working with diverse groups of people, including students, volunteers or customers • Evidence of working independently and as part of a team to achieve goals • Experience in students' unions, colleges or universities • Experience of hybrid or remote-first working environments • Track record of turning ideas into small-scale trials / pilots • Experience working with international students or partners

Personal Attributes / Innovative Mindset • Curious and proactive: naturally asks "why?" and "how could this be easier/better?" • Resilient and reflective: treats setbacks as learning opportunities • Open to change and comfortable with ambiguity • Inclusive and student-centred: designs solutions for everyone, not just the majority • Committed to ethical and responsible innovation • Experience of championing new ideas within an organisation • Willingness to experiment and share failures openly to build culture • Passionate about the role of technology in making education fairer and more accessible

Assessment Method Notes:

Because "innovation" cannot be measured reliably by self-assessment alone, selection will use:

- Behavioural questions: "Tell me about a time you improved something or tried something new — what happened and what changed afterwards?"
- Situational task: "Review this routine form-filling process — propose one realistic improvement and explain the risks, benefits and costs."
- Evidence-based scoring against the criteria above, in line with professional HRM good practice (Truss et al., 2021).

#### 4. ACADEMIC INTERVIEW PREPARATION SCRIPT

Time Target: 10–20 minutes | Tone: Natural, confident, student-level explanation

Core theme: Why this role, JD and PS demonstrate HRM understanding of innovation and change.

##### OPENING (2–3 minutes)

"Thanks for having me. This whole task comes from the conference point: digitisation and automation — like ATMs replacing bank tellers, self-service portals and AI — are taking over routine jobs. HR can't just hire people who follow instructions anymore. I created the Innovation Support Officer role for UWTSD Student Union exactly to solve this problem. My Job Description lays out practical, day-to-day work, and my Person Specification builds 'innovative mindset' as the main requirement, because that's what helps organisations adapt and survive — CIPD (2024) makes clear innovation is now central to organisational success. I'll explain how the design supports HRM learning outcomes: aligning people and processes with organisational goals, responding to internal and external change, and working across national and international contexts."

##### LIKELY QUESTIONS + PREPARED ANSWERS

(Speak freely; do not read word-for-word)

Q1: Why make innovation the core of your Job Description and Person Specification?

"Automation removes repetitive tasks, so the value people bring shifts to creativity, problem-solving and speed of adaptation (Bughin et al., 2019). If I wrote a generic JD asking only for 'good admin

skills', the Union would be left behind when systems and student expectations change. Instead I built innovation into every section — it is not an 'add-on' or optional extra, it is what the person is hired to do. This shows HRM as a strategic activity, not just administrative."

Q2: How exactly does this role help HR and wider organisational goals?

"Strategic HRM is about linking people to what the organisation needs (Truss et al., 2021). This officer will:

- Work with HR to rewrite adverts, interview questions and assessment tasks so we reliably spot innovative candidates;
- Map skills gaps and co-design training for digital, agile and creative working;
- Help build a culture where it is safe to experiment and learn, which reduces fear of change;
- Improve service efficiency and student satisfaction, which helps lower staff turnover and secure long-term stability.

That is exactly what effective HRM achieves."

Q3: How do you measure 'innovative mindset' fairly in candidates?

"You can't just ask 'are you innovative?' — everyone says yes. I use three evidence-based approaches:

- Behavioural questions: 'Tell me about a time you improved something or tried something that failed — what changed afterwards?'
- Situational task: Present a real-looking process and ask for one realistic improvement plus a balanced risk/benefit explanation;
- Split criteria: Essential vs Desirable list, so scoring is transparent and consistent, just like professional HR practice."

Q4: Institutional and environmental factors — what do they mean for HR in this role?

"They operate on two levels:

- Internal: Budget limits, risk appetite, existing culture. If managers are risk-averse, the officer starts with small pilots and quick wins to build trust.
- External: GDPR/data privacy, Equality Act 2010, accessibility rules, sustainability targets, plus economic and regulatory shifts. Less paper, less travel and remote-first options all cut carbon footprint too.

Also, students across different campuses and countries prefer different ways to engage — online chat works well in one region, but face-to-face drop-ins are still preferred in another. HR must create flexible policies and adaptable roles, not rigid rules, to serve all students fairly."

Q5: How does innovation strategy change when you work across different countries or contexts?

"The mindset stays the same: research → trial → feedback → adjust. The details change. For example, a fully digital registration process works well for tech-confident students but excludes those with limited connectivity. HR supports this by building cross-cultural awareness training, making sure

the JD and PS emphasise adaptability, and giving the officer authority to tailor solutions locally. This directly answers the learning outcome about achieving goals in national and international contexts.”

 CLOSING (1–2 minutes)

“Basically: good HRM isn’t just rules and paperwork. This role connects new technology, our people, and environmental goals together. It makes sure UWTSD Student Union keeps delivering great student support — no matter how jobs and technology change in the future. That’s why I’ve designed the JD and PS this way, and why I believe it meets the assessment criteria.

## 5. REFERENCE LIST

- Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) (2024) Innovation in the Workplace: HR’s Role. London: CIPD.
- Bughin, J., Lund, S. and Manyika, J. (2019) Automation and the Future of Work. McKinsey Global Institute.
- Truss, C., Mankin, D., Kelliher, C. and Grimshaw, D. (2021) Strategic Human Resource Management. 2nd ed. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Equality Act 2010 (c. 15). London: The Stationery Office.
- UK GDPR / Data Protection Act 2018. London: The Stationery Office.