

Principles of Human Resource Management (LCBB5012)

COMPONENT 1 – ACADEMIC INTERVIEW FOR HR PROCESSES

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Table of Contents:

1. Introduction	2
2. Job Description – Innovation Support Officer.....	2
3. Person Specification – Innovation Support Officer.....	4
4. Explanation and Justification	7
5. Conclusion.....	8
6. References.....	8

1. Introduction

Technology has changed the way people work and the skills that employers are looking for. Tasks that were previously completed by employees can now be supported or even replaced by digital systems and artificial intelligence. CIPD (2026) explains that digital technologies and AI are now widely used in the modern workplace and are continuing to influence both jobs and the way organisations operate. Because of these changes, being innovative is becoming increasingly important. Innovation is not only about having a completely new idea; it can also involve introducing an improved product or process and putting that improvement into practice (OECD and Eurostat, 2018).

HR therefore has an important role in making sure organisations have people with the right skills and mindset to respond to change. This starts with clearly understanding what a job involves and what is expected from the person doing it. According to CIPD (2025), job design involves establishing employees' roles and responsibilities while helping organisations create value and improve performance. This project focuses on developing a job description and person specification for an Innovation Support Officer at UWTSD Student Union, with particular attention given to creativity, innovation, digital skills and problem-solving.

2. Job Description – Innovation Support Officer

- Job Title and Department

Job Title: Innovation Support Officer
Organisation: UWTSD Students' Union
Department: Student Engagement and Development
Reports to: Student Engagement Manager
Location: UWTSD Students' Union **Employment**
Type: Full-time

- Job Purpose

Purpose of the Innovation Support Officer role is to support the development of new ideas and improvements within UWTSD Students' Union. The role would involve working closely with students and staff to identify problems, understand student needs and find practical ways of improving existing services. Innovation within an organisation is strongly connected to its people, as employees contribute knowledge, ideas and behaviours that can support organisational development.

Shipton (2016) highlight the relationship between human resource management, employee development and organisational innovation. Therefore, the Innovation Support Officer would not only be expected to suggest new ideas, but also to create opportunities for students and staff to contribute to innovation. This could include collecting feedback, supporting student-led projects and exploring new digital tools that could improve the overall student experience.

- Key Duties and Responsibilities

The Innovation Support Officer would be expected to:

- Work with students and staff to identify opportunities for new projects and improvements to existing services.
- Collect student feedback through surveys, meetings, workshops and other engagement activities.
- Support the development and implementation of innovative projects within the Students' Union.
- Research new trends, technologies and ideas that could improve the student experience.
- Organise workshops and activities that encourage students to share ideas and think creatively.
- Work collaboratively with different university departments, student representatives and external partners.
- Help evaluate new projects by collecting feedback and reviewing their outcomes.
- Communicate new initiatives clearly through presentations, meetings and digital communication channels.

- Innovation and Creativity Responsibilities

Creativity would be an important part of this position because the officer needs to generate ideas while also encouraging other people to contribute their own. Amabile and Pratt (2016) distinguish creativity, which concerns the production of novel and useful ideas, from innovation, which involves successfully implementing creative ideas within an organisation. The Innovation Support Officer should create opportunities for students to suggest improvements, explore different solutions to problems and support promising ideas from the initial concept through to implementation. The officer should also be willing to experiment with different approaches while considering whether proposed changes are realistic and beneficial to students.

- Digital and Technology Responsibilities

Technology should also be used to improve student engagement and make Students' Union services more accessible. The officer would use digital platforms to communicate with students, gather feedback, analyse basic information and support projects. The role would also involve keeping up to date with relevant digital developments, including AI and other emerging technologies, and considering where these could improve the student experience. Technology should be introduced where it provides genuine value rather than simply because it is new.

- Key Working Relationships

The Innovation Support Officer would work with: **UWTSD students, Students' Union staff, student representatives, university departments, societies and clubs, and relevant external organisations.**

Strong working relationships are important because innovation often requires people from different backgrounds to exchange knowledge and ideas rather than working independently.

3. Person Specification – Innovation Support Officer

The person specification identifies the knowledge, skills, experience and personal qualities that an individual would need in order to perform effectively as an Innovation Support Officer. Selecting employees with appropriate capabilities is particularly important for innovation because HR practices can influence employees' ability and motivation to contribute towards innovative activities within an organisation (Shipton et al., 2016).

- Education and Qualifications

The successful candidate should have a good educational background, preferably within Business Management, Human Resource Management, Innovation, Marketing or another related subject. A university degree could be considered desirable rather than essential, as candidates may also develop relevant skills through employment and practical experience.

The candidate should also demonstrate a willingness to continue learning and developing professionally. This is particularly relevant in an environment where technology and working practices continue to change.

- Experience

Previous experience of working with students, customers or within a team environment would be beneficial for this position. Experience of supporting projects, organising activities, collecting feedback or contributing ideas for workplace improvements would also be valuable. Innovation should not depend entirely on previous experience. Employees can develop innovative behaviour through workplace learning, interaction and knowledge sharing with other people (Sanders and Lin, 2016). Therefore, candidates who demonstrate a willingness to learn and contribute new ideas should also be considered.

- Knowledge

The successful candidate should have an understanding of innovation and creativity and recognise how these can contribute to organisational development.

Creativity and innovation are closely connected but are not exactly the same. Creativity generally involves developing ideas that are both new and useful, while innovation involves progressing towards the implementation of those ideas within an organisational context (Anderson, Potočník and Zhou, 2014).

For the Innovation Support Officer, this means understanding not only how new ideas can be generated but also how useful ideas can be developed into realistic improvements for students and the Students' Union.

- Innovation and Creativity Skills

Creative thinking would be one of the most important skills required for this role. The successful candidate should be able to recognise opportunities for improvement, approach problems from different perspectives and develop practical ideas.

Research suggests that workplace creativity and innovation can occur at individual, team and organisational levels (Anderson, Potočnik and Zhou, 2014). Therefore, the Innovation Support Officer should not only contribute their own ideas but also encourage students and colleagues to participate in the innovation process.

The candidate should also be open to experimentation and feedback because an idea may need to be changed or developed before it becomes a successful innovation.

- Digital Skills

Good digital skills would be essential because technology has become an important part of communication, collaboration and service delivery.

The candidate should be comfortable using Microsoft Office, online communication platforms, social media and other common digital tools. They should also demonstrate an interest in learning about emerging technologies and considering how they could be used to improve student services.

The role does not necessarily require advanced IT expertise. Instead, the candidate should demonstrate digital adaptability and the ability to learn how to use new technologies when required.

- Communication and Interpersonal Skills

Strong communication and interpersonal skills would be essential because the Innovation Support Officer would regularly interact with students, Students' Union employees, university departments and other stakeholders.

The candidate should be able to listen to different opinions, explain ideas clearly and encourage people to participate. Communication is particularly relevant to innovation because interaction and informal learning between employees can support knowledge sharing and innovative behaviour (Sanders and Lin, 2016).

The successful candidate should therefore be confident communicating with people from different backgrounds while also being willing to listen to their ideas and feedback.

- Problem-Solving and Decision-Making Skills

The candidate should demonstrate good problem-solving skills and be able to analyse a situation before recommending a solution. Innovative behaviour involves more than simply producing ideas; employees also need to consider how ideas can be promoted and implemented successfully (Anderson, Potočnik and Zhou, 2014).

For example, if student engagement with a Students' Union service was low, the Innovation Support Officer should first investigate the reasons behind the problem. This could involve collecting student feedback or reviewing available information before developing possible solutions. This approach would allow decisions to be based on evidence rather than assumptions.

- Personal Attributes

The ideal candidate should be creative, adaptable, proactive, approachable and open-minded. They should also demonstrate confidence when presenting ideas while remaining willing to receive feedback from other people. Adaptability would be particularly important because innovation involves change and uncertainty. The candidate should therefore be willing to learn from both successful and unsuccessful ideas and adjust their approach when necessary.

The Innovation Support Officer should also be capable of working independently while contributing effectively within a team. HRM practices that encourage employee development, collaboration and knowledge sharing can contribute to an organisational environment that supports innovation (Shipton et al., 2016).

- Person Specification Summary

Criteria	Essential	Desirable
Education	Good educational background	Degree in Business, HRM, Innovation or related area
Experience	Experience working with people or teams	Student Union/project experience
Knowledge	Understanding of innovation and creativity	Knowledge of innovation processes
Innovation & Creativity	Creative thinking and ability to identify improvements	Experience implementing ideas
Digital Skills	Confident using common digital tools	Knowledge of emerging technologies
Communication	Strong written and verbal communication	Presentation/workshop experience
Problem-Solving	Ability to analyse problems and develop solutions	Experience solving project-related problems
Teamwork	Ability to work collaboratively	Experience with different stakeholder groups
Personal Attributes	Creative, adaptable, proactive and organised	Leadership potential

4. Explanation and Justification

- Innovation and Creativity

Innovation and creativity are important for organisations that need to respond to new technologies and changing expectations. Creativity focuses on generating new and useful ideas, while innovation also involves putting these ideas into practice (Anderson, Potočník and Zhou, 2014). For UWTSD Students' Union, this could mean developing new services, improving student engagement or using digital tools to provide better support.

- Importance of Innovation for the Role

The Innovation Support Officer needs an innovative mindset because the role involves identifying problems and finding practical ways to improve the student experience. Innovation can also be supported through collaboration and knowledge sharing between people (Sanders and Lin, 2016). Therefore, working closely with students and staff would help the officer understand their needs and develop relevant solutions.

- Justification of the Job Description

The main responsibilities were selected to support innovation within the Students' Union. Collecting student feedback can help identify areas that need improvement, while workshops and collaborative projects can encourage students to contribute their own ideas. Digital responsibilities are also included because technology can provide new ways to communicate with students and improve existing services.

- Justification of the Person Specification

Creativity, communication, digital skills, adaptability and problem-solving were selected as key requirements because they directly support the responsibilities of the role. HRM can contribute to innovation by developing employees and creating an environment where they are encouraged to contribute ideas (Shipton et al., 2016). For this reason, the ideal candidate should not only have relevant knowledge but also be willing to learn, collaborate and adapt to change.

- Role of HRM

HRM helps ensure that the right candidate is selected for the position. The Job Description explains the duties and responsibilities of the Innovation Support Officer, while the Person Specification identifies the skills, knowledge and qualities required from the candidate. Together, these documents can support a fair and structured recruitment and selection process.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the Innovation Support Officer can play an important role in helping UWTSD Students' Union respond to change and improve the student experience. The Job Description identifies responsibilities such as supporting new ideas, gathering student feedback and using digital tools, while the Person Specification focuses on creativity, communication, adaptability and problem-solving. These qualities are important because innovation involves both developing useful ideas and putting them into practice (Anderson, Potočnik and Zhou, 2014). Overall, having a clear Job Description and Person Specification can help HR select a candidate who is suitable for the role and able to contribute to innovation within the Students' Union.

6. References

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