تمكين
Tamkeen

Human Resources Sector

Skills Report 2025

مهارات البحرين
Skills Bahrain

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Executive Summary

Globally, the Human Resources (HR) sector is experiencing a shift, driven by technological advancements, evolving workforce expectations, and the growing importance of strategic HR management. The integration of technological advancements and data analytics in HR processes is enhancing recruitment, employee engagement, and performance management, enabling organizations to make data-driven decisions. This shift towards a strategic role is evident in Bahrain's HR landscape, where the sector is evolving to reflect the Kingdom's commitment to developing its human capital and aligning with global best practices.

Traditionally, HR roles in Bahrain have been heavily administrative, focusing on tasks such as payroll management, recruitment, and employee record maintenance. However, the emerging trend towards strategic HR functions emphasizes workforce planning, organizational development, and enhancing corporate culture. This change mirrors the broader global trend where HR is increasingly recognized as a critical component of business strategy rather than merely an administrative function.

Bahrain's HR function has evolved over the past decade. There is increasing emphasis on professional development and training, with prominent institutions offering comprehensive HR programs that cater to the growing need for skilled HR professionals. These programs range from undergraduate degrees to advanced diplomas and certifications, such as the globally recognized Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) qualifications.

As HR roles are shifting so are the requirements for HR professionals. In contemporary society, professionals in the field are key drivers of organizational principles, culture, and objectives. To do so effectively, HR professionals are expected to possess and enhance core skills in areas such as building inclusivity, empathy, initiative, and communication. These skills contribute to the creation of an inclusive environment in which every individual is given the resources needed to flourish, and ultimately contribute to organizational success.

This has led to increased demand for learning and development roles that provide effective psychological support, facilitate skill development, and promote continuous learning among employees. Similarly, organizational design and development professionals who enhance organizational performance are also in demand.

The HR function of the future will require innovative practices centered around continuous professional development. It is important for HR leaders to take a proactive approach to bridge existing skill gaps, and consequently strengthen the workforce with the support of sector skills frameworks. As Bahrain's economy continues to modernize, the HR sector will play a pivotal role in ensuring the public and private sector workforce are adequately trained and equipped to drive economic growth.

Introduction and Purpose

Purpose

This report serves as a resource for individuals, organizations, and professionals intending to or currently operating in the HR sector. Its primary aim is to provide a clear understanding of both the current and future skills landscape within the sector, reflecting the views and insights from industry representatives alongside comprehensive secondary research. The report identifies emerging trends, highlights the evolving nature of jobs and career opportunities in the sector, and outlines critical skills required to enhance the workforce's alignment with industry needs. Additionally, it provides an overview of the various educational pathways and training programs available to embark on or advance a career within the HR sector.

Intended Audience

Individuals

Provides insights into sector trends, jobs and skills in demand, as well as relevant trainings and programs, aiding in informed career planning.

Employers

Provides insights into sector trends, current and emerging skills landscape, and relevant trainings to guide workforce planning.

Academia & Training Providers

Provides insights to support curriculum and training program development in alignment with industry needs.

Methodology

Research Methodology

A robust and systematic approach was followed with several key research activities, starting with an international benchmarking exercise to implement best practices in the development of a sector skills report. This initial step, in addition to guidelines from the International Labour Organization (ILO), informed the design of the engagement methodology outlined in the following section.

Engagement with sector representatives (see 'Engagement Methodology') provided the core insights into the sector's specific dynamics and requirements, which are embedded throughout the report. The findings from these research activities have been consolidated into the sector skills report, which serves as a valuable resource for individuals, employers, academic institutions, and training providers.

Engagement Methodology

To gather critical insights, a Sector Working Group was formed, serving as a collaborative platform for engagement and exchange of knowledge. The Sector Working Group aimed to uncover trends, opportunities, challenges within the sector, and to identify the skills gaps in the workforce.

This group included a diverse array of stakeholders and experts from both local and regional contexts, encompassing representatives from small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), as well as large companies, academic institutions, and vocational training centers. This approach ensures that the Sector Working Group is representative of the sector and captures a comprehensive view of its workforce needs.

A series of workshops, from May to June 2024, were conducted with the active participation of over 15 representatives holding varying occupations within the HR function in Bahrain. These collaborative sessions were crucial in validating job demands and career pathways in the HR sector, drawing on the collective insights of the Sector Working Group members.

The Sector Working Group's contributions were instrumental in developing a skills framework specifically tailored to Bahrain's human resources sector. The insights and findings from the Sector Working Group's engagement have been thoroughly integrated into this report, offering detailed guidance and strategic recommendations for the sector's development.

Sector Overview

Human capital has the power to significantly enhance a nation's efficiency, productivity, and overall development. Labor often represents the largest single expense for organizations but can also offer the highest returns if nurtured effectively. HR capabilities are present across all industries, public and private, serving as an integral function of the workforce and therefore the economy in which they reside. On a macro level, HR is responsible for adherence to laws, alignment with national initiatives, and building talent within the workforce. On a micro level HR oversees the end-to-end management of employees, acting as a bridge between leadership and employees.

Traditionally, the HR function within an organization has undertaken primarily administrative tasks such as hiring, payroll, and enforcing company policies. HR in this context has operated reactively, dealing with issues as they have arisen and ensuring compliance with labor laws and regulations. However, thanks to technological advancement, HR have evolved into a more strategic role within organizations. HR functions today are proactive, responsible for developing company culture, driving employee engagement, contributing to workforce forecasting, and aligning human capital with organizational goals.

HR departments manage recruitment and selection processes, employee relations, compensation and benefits, and legal compliance. Within recruitment and selection, HR managers implement strategies to attract talent in line with the organization's goals and culture. This is facilitated through interviews, coordination with departmental staffing needs, and management of the onboarding process to integrate new employees. Following the recruitment process, HR departments are involved in setting compensation and benefits to ensure organizations remain fair and competitive. HR departments also design employee development and training mechanisms to upskill staff and ensure the workforce has the right skill sets to maximize individual and collective performance potential. HR functions consequently serve strategic organizational goals through the identification and fulfillment of talent gaps to advance organizational mobility and agility.

HR practices have transformed globally, with technology integration and data analytics becoming more common. According to the Sector Working Group, organizations in Bahrain are starting to follow suit, implementing Human Resource Management Systems (HRMS), AI-powered recruitment tools, and performance management mechanisms to enhance recruitment, employee engagement, and improve organizational efficiency. These technological advancements enable HR professionals to make data-driven decisions, which are essential for strategic workforce planning and management. However, the tools employed by HR functions extend beyond streamlining processes; they allow HR departments to customize their strategy to local markets, build flexible working models, and align with national initiatives.

Human Resources Sector Trends

The HR business function is evolving following the emergence of several trends that are shaping the future of the industry and workforce dynamics. These trends include the advancement of technology, a shift towards a more adaptable workforce, and the growing emphasis on inclusive policies and practices to meet workforce demands. As a result, the role of HR has evolved from a traditional, primarily administrative function into a strategic component within organizations, responsible for driving change and innovation. The following trends have been identified by the Sector Working Group:

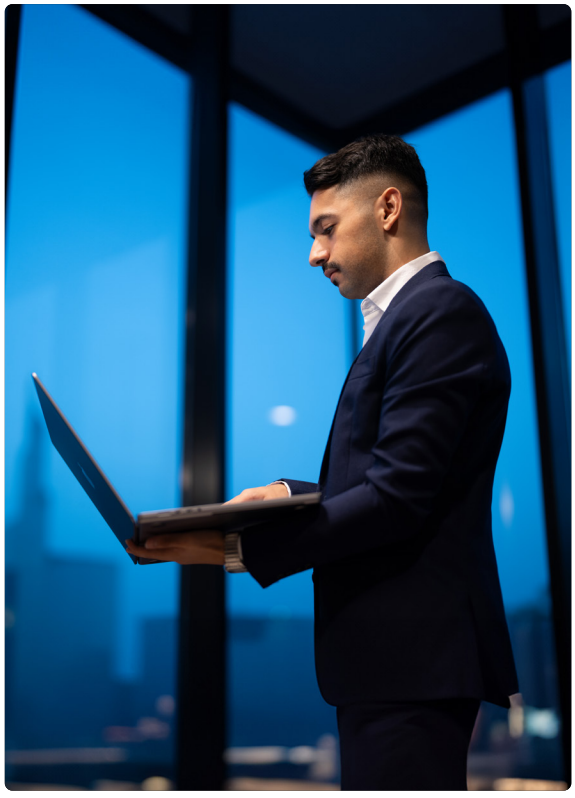
The Impact of Technological Advancements

Technological advancements have transformed HR, enabling its functions to leverage technology to enhance the human experience, optimize processes, and drive business growth. The COVID-19 pandemic accelerated this transformation by forcing organizations to rapidly adapt to remote and hybrid work models. This shift significantly impacted onboarding, recruitment, development, and compensation processes, emphasizing the need for digital solutions.

Software as a Service (SaaS) platforms are being integrated into HR departments due to their abilities to help streamline HR processes, improve efficiency, and enhance employee experience. SaaS applications manage various HR functions, such as recruitment, performance management, benefits administration, and employee engagement. For example, applicant tracking systems (ATS) automate job postings, use AI to screen resumes, and generate hiring metrics. This significantly reduces the time spent on administrative tasks, allowing HR professionals to focus on developing and implementing strategic policies. This, coupled with the real-time data collected from SaaS platforms enables informed decision-making that aligns with organizational goals and improves overall HR strategy and execution.

SaaS platforms are also implemented in the form of self-service portals. Self-service portals empower employees by enabling them to autonomously manage personal information, request time off, and access benefits information. This autonomy leads to greater satisfaction and engagement among employees while simultaneously reducing the administrative costs of HR functions. Similarly, the platforms often feature comprehensive training and development tools, facilitating regular evaluations, goal tracking, and progress monitoring. These capabilities support continuous learning and career growth, further enhancing the overall employee experience.

The adoption of advanced technologies in HR functions across Bahrain is therefore enabling the transformation of HR from an administrative function to a strategic priority, focused on fostering sustainable business growth and cultivating a competitive workforce.



Cultivating a Culture of Lifelong Learning

Lifelong learning comprises of training and development initiatives. Training focuses on building job-specific skills that equip individuals with the tools needed to perform their work effectively and it can open avenues for career advancement. Meanwhile, development initiatives aim to foster long-term individual growth and enhance core skills. They also contribute to creating an inclusive work environment and enhance alignment with organizational needs.

Encouraging lifelong learning ensures talent remains agile and adaptable. These are qualities that HR departments keenly promote given the increasing requirement for individuals to take on varied responsibilities and adapt to evolving organizational needs. HR functions encourage lifelong learning by providing the necessary resources and time for reskilling and upskilling. This has led to the creation of an internal marketplace in many organizations that enables internal mobility, benefiting both employee and organizational agility.

Microlearning, for example, provides short, focused courses that facilitate quick knowledge acquisition and skill development. By integrating microlearning into daily tasks, organizations can enhance retention and practical application of knowledge. This approach can comprise of skill-specific webinars, mentorship opportunities, and interactive knowledge platforms.

The Sector Working Group has identified lifelong learning as a valued characteristic as it ensures employees are adaptable, skilled, and prepared for future success. Cultivating an environment that facilitates this within an organization requires a shift from traditional learning methods to continuous learning approaches.

Overall, training and development are becoming central drivers of organizational success, employee satisfaction, and the alignment of individual professional goals. Organizations that thrive in the continually changing work landscape are those that cultivate a culture of lifelong learning, where employees continuously update their skills, learn new ones, and adapt to the changing business environment.

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Practices

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) are gaining traction worldwide and have become organizational priorities due to changing sentiments among employees. The new generation of employees, in particular, prioritize employers that support strong DEI strategies and social justice issues. The rise of employee activism has led to organizations realigning their ethos to create inclusive, holistic workplaces, often publicizing DEI strategies to enhance their public image and attract talent.

Diversity involves the representation of varied identities and differences, such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, religion, and abilities. The Sector Working Group have highlighted that diversity is carefully factored into recruitment practices that ensure a broad spectrum of candidates from different backgrounds. Equity goes beyond representation to ensure fair treatment, access, and opportunity by eliminating barriers that prevent full participation. This includes equitable pay structures, promotions, and opportunities in HR. Moreover, inclusion is the practice of creating a welcoming environment where all individuals feel valued and respected and enjoy equal access to resources and opportunities.

By appreciating diverse perspectives, organizations demonstrate their commitment to creating equitable environments. Integrating DEI in HR practices mitigates challenges such as unconscious biases, recruitment and promotion biases, and difficulties in crafting or implementing inclusive policies. HR functions can also foster an inclusive culture across all levels of the organization by conducting regular DEI training for professionals within the organization, particularly among higher-level management.

With persistent efforts, continuous learning, and a genuine commitment to change, HR can lead the way in advancing DEI practices and shaping a more inclusive workforce.

Transition of Employee-Centric Workplace

Globally, a shift towards prioritizing mental health, work-life balance, and adaptable working models has led to the onset of employee wellbeing becoming a core focus of organizations. Organizations are recognizing the ripple effect of creating a safe, inclusive, and transparent environment for employees. As a result, they are increasingly investing in the creation of employee-centric workplaces in an attempt to foster long-term, sustainable organizational growth. Bahrain has followed suit in this regard through the onset of a variety of initiatives to promote a people-first culture.

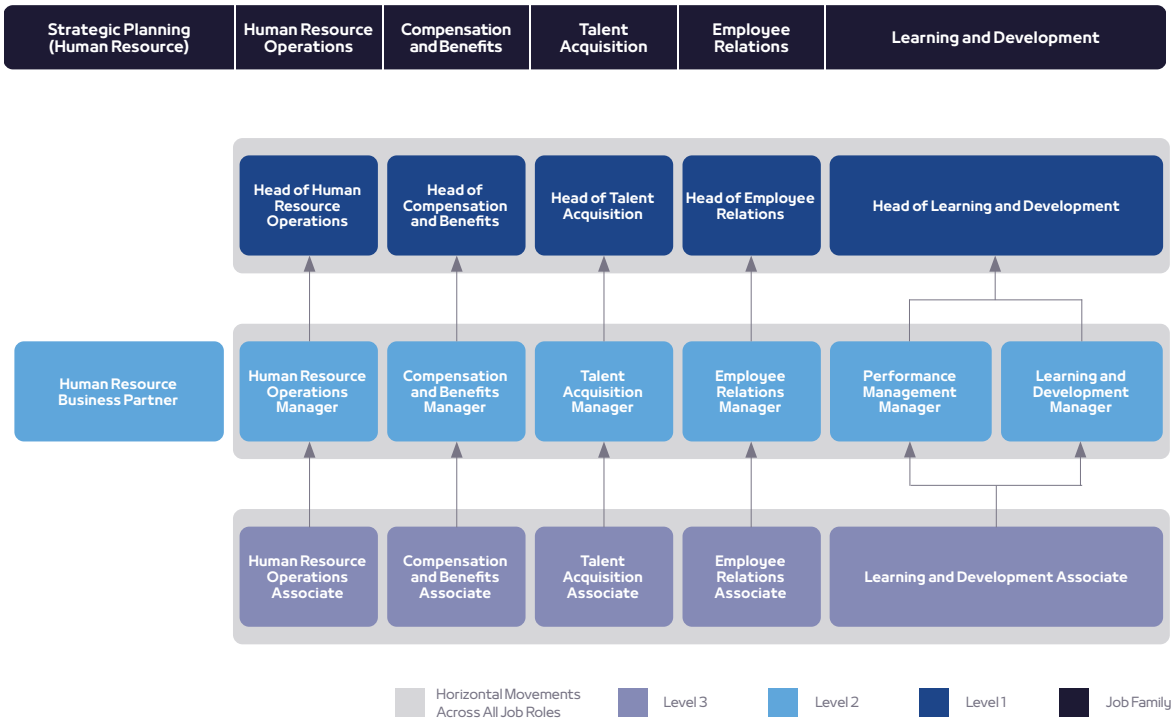
The COVID-19 pandemic contributed to the normalization of flexible working models, and served to propel the tools and policies needed to seamlessly enable hybrid work. Remote and hybrid work models are one example of how companies have shifted to better accommodate employees' needs. Flexible work models provide individuals with improved work-life balance by negating commute times and creating an environment in which employees have more control over their schedule. It allows employees to manage their personal responsibilities, while simultaneously fulfilling their professional obligations within the comfort of their own space. Flexible work models also contribute to the creation of wider talent pools as organizations are able to hire talent outside of their geographic area. Access to a wider talent pool expands hiring options, promotes diversity, and allows organizations to find employees with specialized skill sets, without the added cost of having to relocate individuals to their centralized office.

Another mechanism organizations have employed to facilitate an employee-centric workplace is the creation of team building opportunities. Team building, through social activities and shared experiences, can enhance organizational culture by strengthening the relationship between employees. It provides individuals with an avenue to build genuine relationships, while having a strong sense of their identity within the working environment. This can consequently boost employee engagement as it provides individuals with personal fulfilment at work, while improving communication between team members. Ultimately, building an employee-centric workforce constructs a working atmosphere where employees feel valued and respected, spurring employee loyalty to the organization.

Career Opportunities

The composition of local and global talent provides the HR industry with a broad view of multicultural insights and professional practices. Members of the Sector Working Group have shared in the continual effort to promote diverse, equitable, and inclusive practices across their organizations, with specific initiatives aimed at upskilling individuals to create agility and mobility.

Figure 1: Human Resources Career Pathway Map.



The Human Resources Career Pathway Map highlights a variety of opportunities for individuals. Entry- and mid-level job roles provide flexibility and promote lateral career progression for those interested in exploring various paths. This characteristic is advantageous to professionals looking to pursue a career in HR as it allows career exploration within various functions. As individuals advance to senior positions, career shifts become less common but remain possible, as employees often focus on honing their expertise and pursuing leadership roles. Professionals are encouraged to utilize the National Occupational Standards to identify the upskilling requirements necessary to facilitate their career progression.

Six job families have been outlined by the Sector Working Group that cover the majority of sector-specific jobs across the HR spectrum:

HR strategic planning involves developing long-term HR strategies aligned with organizational goals. Here, the Sector Working Group highlighted a particular need for organizational design and development professionals. These roles include workforce planning, talent management, and succession planning to ensure an organization has the right skills and capabilities to meet future demands.

HR operations roles focuses on the day-to-day management of HR functions such as payroll, benefits administration, and employee records management. These professionals ensure compliance with labor laws and company policies, maintaining efficient and effective HR processes.

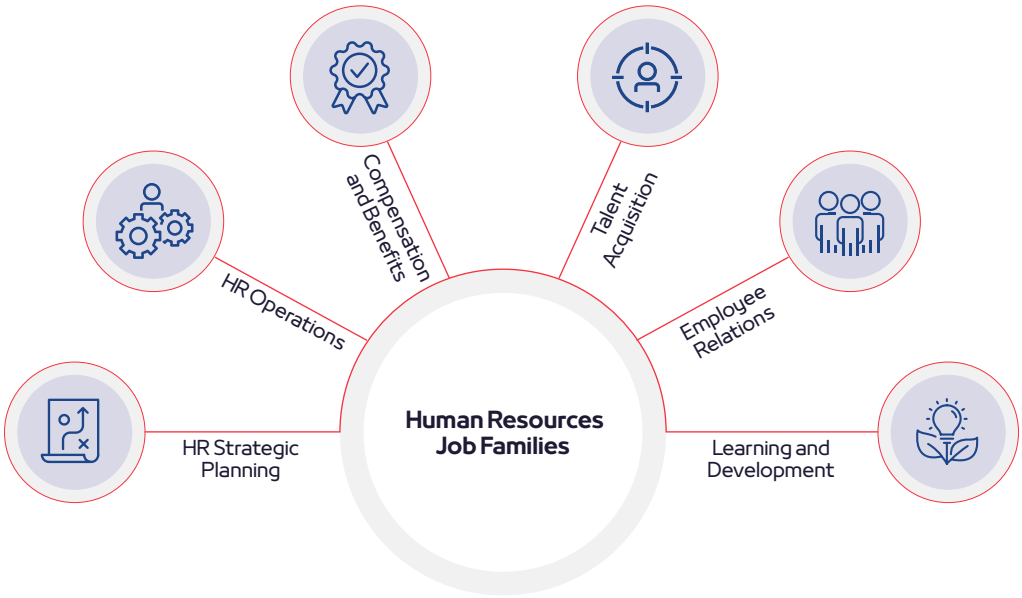
Compensation and benefits professionals are collectively responsible for designing and managing employee remuneration programs, including salaries, bonuses, and benefits packages. They analyze market trends to ensure competitive and fair compensation, enhancing employee satisfaction and retention. In particular, the Sector Working Group identified the role of compensation and benefits manager as highly sought after within today's HR landscape.

Talent acquisition attracts, recruits, and onboards new employees. The department develops sourcing strategies, conducts interviews, and manages the hiring process to ensure the organization secures top talent to meet its needs.

Employee relations focuses on maintaining positive relationships between the employer and employees. This includes handling grievances, mediating disputes, and ensuring a harmonious workplace environment through effective communication and conflict resolution.

Learning and development handles the design and implementation of training programs to enhance employees' skills and knowledge. These professionals focus on training needs, developing educational initiatives, and evaluating the effectiveness of training programs to support career growth and organizational performance. Employers have had difficulties recruiting professionals in this arena due to a lack of practical experience, however the HR Sector Working Group have noted it as an in-demand role.

Figure 2: Human Resources Job Families



Jobs in Demand

The Sector Working Group has identified several roles in demand within the HR sector. For example, they have emphasized the increasing need for learning and development professionals, driven by the growing focus on DEI practices and the heightened awareness of mental health and wellbeing within the professional environment.

Figure 3: Jobs anticipated by the Sector Working Group to be in demand.

Note: The jobs listed below are highlighted by the Sector Working Group and are not ranked based on their level of demand.

Job in Demand	Job Overview
Compensation and Benefits Manager	Compensation and Benefits Managers develop and manage an organization's remuneration strategies, ensuring competitive and equitable pay structures and maintaining employee satisfaction and retention. These professionals design and implement compensation plans, benefits packages, and incentive programs that align with the organization's goals and budget. Compensation and Benefits Managers possess communication and negotiation skills to address related employee concerns and effectively collaborate with relevant stakeholders.
Learning and Development Professional	Learning and Development (L&D) professionals such as career coaches foster employee growth and enhance organizational performance. These professionals provide psychological support, skill development, and mentorship, guiding employees through career transitions and enhancing their capabilities. L&D professionals must be adept at designing and implementing development programs, conducting assessments, and providing ongoing support and feedback to ensure continuous improvement and career progression.
Organizational Design and Development Professional	Organizational Design and Development professionals focus on creating and implementing strategies that enhance organizational performance, drive change management, and improve overall efficiency. They align organizational structures with business goals, foster a positive culture, and ensure the successful execution of development initiatives.

Career Spotlight

Career Spotlight: LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT PROFESSIONAL

Role Overview

Learning and Development Professionals such as career therapists, coaches, and mentors are responsible for enhancing employee growth and organizational performance. They design and deliver development programs, conduct skills assessments, and provide ongoing support to ensure continuous improvement and career progression. The role requires strong interpersonal and communication skills and expertise in career counselling and coaching methodologies, as well as a deep understanding of organizational dynamics and industry trends.

These professionals offer psychological support, guide employees through career transitions, and enhance their capabilities by developing personalized coaching and mentoring plans. L&D professionals are adept at identifying skill gaps, designing and implementing development programs, conducting assessments, and providing ongoing support and feedback to foster a culture of continuous learning, innovative training, and development aligned with organizational goals.

Career Pathway and Progression

Learning and Development Professionals typically start out in entry-level learning and development positions, where they assist in designing and implementing training programs. With experience, they can advance to managerial roles, overseeing larger programs and teams. Further progression can lead to senior roles such as head of learning and development, where they drive the strategic direction of the organization's development initiatives. Specialists in career therapy, coaching, and mentoring may also advance to senior advisory jobs, providing expert guidance across the organization.

Individuals who have advanced to senior roles possess the capability to transition laterally into other positions within the HR function. These roles may include areas such as employee relations, talent acquisition, HR operations, and compensation and benefits. Their extensive experience and comprehensive understanding of HR processes enable them to effectively manage and lead diverse teams, implement strategic initiatives, and contribute to the success of the organization.

Career Spotlight: COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS MANAGER

Role Overview

Compensation and benefits managers develop and oversee an organization's remuneration strategies, ensuring competitive and equitable pay structures to maintain employee satisfaction and retention. They are responsible for designing compensation plans, benefits packages, and incentive programs that align with the organization's goals and budget. These managers conduct market salary surveys, analyze compensation data, and ensure compliance with legal and regulatory standards. They possess strong communication and negotiation skills to collaborate effectively with HR teams, management, and external vendors to address employee concerns regarding compensation and benefits, and to ensure remuneration packages are competitive and fair.

Career Pathway and Progression

Individuals looking to become compensation and benefits managers often start their careers in entry-level associate roles. As a compensation and benefits associate, an individual is responsible for supporting the development and administration of compensation and benefits programs. They then have the potential to progress to the role of compensation and benefits manager, taking on more responsibility for designing and managing these programs. A next step can involve advancing to the position of head of compensation and benefits, with responsibilities including oversight of the entire remuneration strategy and its alignment with organizational objectives.

At each stage of this career pathway, individuals have opportunities to transition into various HR functions. This versatility is attributed to the significant overlap in the required core and technical skills for these roles.

Career Spotlight: EMPLOYEE RELATIONS ASSOCIATE

Role Overview

An employee relations associate contributes to maintaining and enhancing the employer-employee relationship within an organization. This role involves supporting the resolution of workplace issues, facilitating communication between employees and management, and ensuring compliance with labor laws and company policies. The job also extends to the development and implementation of programs that improve employee engagement and satisfaction, contributing to a positive and productive work environment. Excellent communication and interpersonal skills are sought after for this role, as it requires the ability to effectively mediate disputes and foster a collaborative workplace culture.

Career Pathway and Progression

Employee relations associates often start their careers by supporting HR initiatives and assisting in the resolution of employee issues. As they gain experience and demonstrate proficiency in handling employee relations matters, associates can advance to roles such as employee relations specialist or senior employee relations specialist. In these positions, they take on more significant responsibilities, such as leading investigations, advising management on employee relations strategies, and developing comprehensive employee engagement programs.

With further experience and refinement of leadership capabilities, professionals can progress to managerial roles such as employee relations manager or director of employee relations. In these senior positions, they oversee the employee relations function, mentor junior staff, and align employee relations strategies with organizational goals. They are also involved in high-level decision-making and play a critical role in shaping the company's overall HR strategy.

As with the other HR roles identified above, the skills gained as an employee relations associate are highly transferable within the HR function. For instance, the communication, conflict resolution, and analytical skills developed in employee relations are valuable for roles focused on recruitment, HR policy implementation, and employee compensation. This versatility allows employee relations associates to explore diverse career opportunities within the HR field.

Preparing a Future-Ready Human Resources Workforce

In today's world, industries are constantly changing and evolving, making a shift in mindset crucial for professionals to succeed. The traditional focus on tenure and job titles is being replaced by a skill-centric approach, and individuals must adapt to the changing job landscape. This requires regular skills development and a continuous learning approach to professional growth.

Recognizing this need, Tamkeen, in collaboration with the Sector Working Group, has developed National Occupational Standards and Career Pathway Maps specifically for the HR sector. These resources can be used to identify the skills required by the sector and illustrate career trajectories available within the industry, both vertically and laterally. They provide a clear framework for the skills and competencies required at different stages and roles, giving direction to those who wish to progress or pivot in the sector. By doing so, this approach supports employees in making well-informed decisions about their career paths and professional development, focusing on the acquisition and perfection of skills which are most sought after and needed in the HR sector.

Skills can be categorized as either core or technical skills, both of which are critical to building a successful and competent workforce. Core skills—also known as generic or soft skills—are essential for performing well in any environment or organization and are becoming increasingly important to employers. These core skills have been captured in a well-defined core skills framework which can be used across all industries. Meanwhile, technical skills including the abilities, knowledge, or expertise required to perform specific, job-related tasks are also vital. Many of these skills can be acquired through vocational training, learning programs or on-the-job experience.

Bahrain's Core Skills Framework

Tamkeen has developed and pioneered a core skills framework as part of the country's wider skills framework. The core skills framework has been aligned with a comprehensive list of international benchmarks and best practices, whilst reflecting the specific needs and aspirations of Bahrain as a progressive country.

Core skills underpin, promote, and provide the foundation required for an employee to carry out specific job roles and functions. They are usually gained through life and work experience or through structured learning and training programs. Core skills are essential for any job or profession and provide a strong basis for lifelong learning and for building the technical skills required to support specific job roles.

The core skills framework is structured around three key pillars: social intelligence, self-management, and analytical skills, each playing a vital role in shaping a proficient and adaptive workforce. Under each of the key pillars, four core skills are defined forming a complete framework of twelve core skills.

Core Skills Framework

SOCIAL INTELLIGENCE

The ability to be self-aware, inclusive, communicative and form relationships with others with empathy, compassion and assertiveness

Building Inclusivity

The ability to create an environment and manage relationships across diverse groups in a range of different contexts by seeking to establish common ground regardless of race, ethnicity, religion, gender, age, ability, education, or socio-economic status.

Communication

The ability to listen effectively and understand, articulate thoughts and ideas effectively, exchange information, employ negotiation skills and use oral, written and non-verbal skills across a range of different environments.

Empathy

The ability to demonstrate emotional intelligence by demonstrating awareness of the feelings and emotions of others and being able to act accordingly within that context.

Collaboration and Teamwork

The ability to work collectively and effectively with one or more people in order to achieve a common goal, bringing together a range of experience and skills based on exchanging ideas, sharing experience and developing creative solutions.

SELF MANAGEMENT

The ability to manage behaviors, thoughts and emotions in a conscious and productive way

Adaptability

The ability to easily adapt to new situations and changing circumstances in life and work and change actions as required.

Initiative

The ability to think independently, identify opportunities, think innovatively and take action when necessary and without direction.

Planning and Organizing

The ability to plan and organize tasks in order to fulfill requirements within a given time frame.

Literacy

The ability to understand and have the confidence and skills to work with language to identify, interpret, create and communicate effectively in written and oral formats.

ANALYTICAL SKILLS

The ability to collect, organize, visualize and assimilate data using a range of tools and skills

Digital Literacy

The ability to find, evaluate, analyze, use, share and create content using digital devices, use software applications and troubleshoot common problems.

Critical Thinking

The ability to analyze, interpret, evaluate, infer, explain, synthesize and self-reflect in the context of making reasoned judgements based on a logical sequence of independent thought.

Problem Solving

The ability to identify and assess issues and problems and make use of available resources to evaluate and generate potential solutions in personal, social and work contexts.

Numeracy

The ability to understand and have the confidence and skills to work with numbers using numerical skills to process, interpret and communicate information to help understand, predict and solve problems.

Core Skills to Enable Your Success in the Human Resources Sector

Core skills provide a foundation for continuous learning and development and play a crucial role in achieving success in a dynamic workplace. As professionals progress in their careers, there is greater emphasis on an advanced level of core skills that make up the key characteristics of a successful leader. The Sector Working Group highlighted six overarching core skills that are required across most job roles in the sector, as outlined in Figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Core skills in demand identified by the Sector Working Group

Note: The skills listed below are highlighted by the Sector Working Group and are not ranked based on their level of demand.

Adaptability	Adaptability is the ability to adjust to new conditions and challenges quickly and efficiently. In the HR sector, this skill allows professionals to manage the constant changes in workplace dynamics, regulatory requirements, and technological advancements. Being adaptable ensures that HR teams can implement new policies and practices effectively, keeping the organization agile and responsive.
Building Inclusivity	Building inclusivity involves creating a work environment where diverse perspectives and backgrounds are valued and integrated into everyday operations. In HR, this skill aids the development and implementation of DEI initiatives that foster a sense of belonging among employees. The ability to build inclusivity is highly sought after in HR as it aligns with modern organizational values and enhances overall company performance.
Communication	Communication is the ability to convey information clearly and listen actively. In HR, strong communication skills are needed for mediating conflicts, conducting interviews, delivering training, and ensuring that company policies are understood and followed. Effective communication facilitates smooth interactions across all levels of the organization, promoting transparency, trust, and a positive workplace culture.
Digital Literacy	Digital literacy refers to the proficient use of digital tools and platforms. In the HR sector, digital literacy is important for managing HR information systems, utilizing data analytics, and implementing digital learning and development programs. As technology continues to shape the HR landscape, professionals with strong digital skills are increasingly valued for their ability to enhance efficiency, streamline processes, and drive innovation.
Empathy	In HR, empathy is required for addressing employee concerns, fostering a supportive work environment, and resolving conflicts effectively. Empathetic HR professionals can build stronger relationships with employees, leading to increased trust and loyalty. The Sector Working Group highlighted this skill as important in nurturing a positive workplace atmosphere and improving employee well-being and engagement.
Initiative	Initiative is the skill of assessing situations and taking proactive, independent action. In HR, showing initiative involves identifying opportunities for improvement, driving new projects, and addressing issues before they escalate. This skill demonstrates leadership potential, innovation, and a commitment to continuous improvement. HR professionals who take initiative help their organizations stay ahead of challenges and capitalize on new opportunities, contributing to long-term success.

Critical Technical Skills for an Agile Workforce

Building on the insights from the earlier sections of this report, it is evident that specific technical skills are in demand within the HR sector. A deeper understanding of these key skills can guide professionals in upskilling, reskilling, or aligning their current expertise with the sector's requirements. Professionals equipped with the relevant technical skills are well-positioned to contribute significantly to the industry's evolution. Here, the Sector Working Group insights have informed the following list of technical skills currently in demand in Bahrain:

Figure 5: Technical skills in demand identified by the Sector Working Group

Note: The technical skills listed below are highlighted by the Sector working Group and are not ranked according to their level of demand.

Policy Writing and Development
Involves the development, drafting, and revision of HR policies, making sure they are comprehensive and in line with legal requirements, at the same time ensuring alignment with organizational goals and culture. This requires a mixture of research skills to collect required information and writing proficiency to develop clear, concise, and well-structured policy documents.

Law and HR Governance Compliance
Ensures that HR practices and policies adhere to all legal standards and governance frameworks, reducing risks and promoting ethical behavior within the organization. Consistently applying and enforcing HR policies and procedures, preparing for internal and external compliance audits, and educating HR staff and management on legal and governance issues are all critical components of this skill.

Data Analysis
Involves the analysis and interpretation of HR data to support informed decision-making, improve HR processes, and enhance overall organizational performance. The skill often requires proficiency in the use of analytical tools such as Excel, SPSS, or HRIS software, as well as the ability to develop clear and informative reports and dashboards for presentation to stakeholders.

Organizational Development
Focuses on designing and implementing strategies to enhance organizational effectiveness, boost workforce capabilities, and foster a positive work environment aligned with company values. Organizational development also includes crafting long-term growth strategies, designing systems to evaluate and improve employee performance, and implementing leadership training and development programs.

Training Programs and Initiatives

The education and training landscape in Bahrain provides a comprehensive foundation for addressing many of the HR sector's immediate requirements through a wide range of undergraduate, postgraduate, diploma, and vocational training programs. These programs offer individuals various pathways to build and develop rewarding careers in the sector.

However, greater alignment and ongoing engagement between education institutions, training providers, and employers within the industry are required to better evaluate and expand the learning opportunities and career prospects within HR. Such a proactive approach will be key to ensuring that the workforce remains competitive and prepared to meet future demand as the sector continues to embrace digital transformation and prioritize DEI practices.

Degree Programs

Bahrain's higher education landscape offers a variety of opportunities for individuals who are passionate about pursuing a career in the HR sector. At the undergraduate level, aspiring professionals can embark on a variety of HR-related bachelor's degrees in management, business administration, and business studies. These HR-specific programs provide a comprehensive understanding of the essential skills and knowledge required for a career in human resources, covering areas such as HR development, employment law, talent management, and compensation and benefits, among a range of other topics.

At the postgraduate level, individuals can further enhance their skills and expertise through specialized master's programs, including MSc degrees in Human Resources Management. These specialized programs empower students to develop niche expertise and pursue rewarding careers in the HR field. Specifically, they provide students with extensive knowledge on strategic HR management, labor relations and employment law, HR metrics and analytics, and HR information systems, preparing individuals for managerial roles in HR departments.

Diplomas and Vocational Training Programs

Vocational training is crucial in equipping individuals with the specialized skills required to excel in the varied roles within human resources, and Bahrain is home to a variety of quality courses. Members of the Sector Working Group in fact highlighted the extensive opportunities within Bahrain's training landscape, emphasizing the introduction of new courses to address emerging trends and industry requirements. Among the examples, a pilot training program in Bahrain is specialized to focus on integrating labor law principles into HR practices.

Several training institutions within the Kingdom provide diplomas and certification courses to arm individuals with practical skills, industry-relevant knowledge, and recognized accreditation, such as the Certified HR Manager (CHRM), Certified Compensation and Benefits Manager (CCBM), and Certified Recruitment Analyst (CRA) qualifications, to name a few. Notably, some institutions in Bahrain offers the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) program. Individuals can undertake Levels 3, 5, and 7 of the CIPD, covering comprehensive HR topics including talent management, employee relations, strategic human resource management, and organizational development. The Sector Working Group emphasized the global recognition of this qualification and the significant value it adds for employees who hold it as they advance along their career paths.

Tamkeen is dedicated to supporting the enhancement of skills and competencies of both individuals and businesses by addressing the changing demands of the HR sector. The semi-autonomous government agency offers several programs that help bridge skill gaps and foster a culture of continuous learning and adaptation. It also offers businesses support to promote the upskilling and employment of Bahrainis in the HR sector and supports the overall competitiveness and sustainability of the Bahraini economy.

Tamkeen: Employment Support Programs

National Employment Program	The program encourages private sector enterprises to employ nationals through wage support for up to five years. This helps Bahraini graduates and jobseekers to enter the labor market, while also supporting enterprises to employ the talent they need to drive their productivity and success.
Jobseeker Training Program	The program provides training and upskilling opportunities for jobseekers nominated by the Ministry of Labour to increase their competitiveness and facilitate their entry to the labor market.
Train and Place Program	The program offers training support for jobseekers to gain essential skills and requirements for the labor market through creating sustainable employment opportunities and matching the requirements of the private sector with available talent.
On-the-Job Training Program	The program provides opportunities for jobseekers to gain practical work experiences that can equip them with the required skills to enter the labor market.
Apprenticeship Program	The program, in collaboration with academic and vocational training institutes, provides enterprises with the opportunity to employ Bahrainis as apprentices, giving them the chance to obtain in-demand vocational skills across different trades as well as specialize in the fields of information technology, cybersecurity, and other future jobs.

Tamkeen: Career Development Support Programs

Wage Increment Support	The program allows enterprises to obtain wage increment support for existing employees, facilitating the career progression of Bahrainis in the private sector and encouraging employers to retain and reward their workforce. As part of Tamkeen's commitment to supporting this progression, enterprises are encouraged to hire new talent at higher wages by fully covering the difference between the new and previous wages.
Leadership Employment Program	The program aims to empower Bahrainis to advance in their careers by providing wage support/increment for enterprises looking to employ Bahrainis in mid and executive jobs in the private sector. This enables enterprises to employ and promote talented individuals to assume leadership roles, thus helping Bahrainis progress in their careers.
Enterprise Training Support Program	The program offers enterprises support with their training costs to upskill and develop their human capital with the aim of improving their competencies and capabilities to become more productive, and help enterprises grow, remain competitive, and retain talented employees.
Professional Certification Program	The program offers individuals an opportunity to enhance their skills and build their competencies through attaining internationally accredited professional certificates related to their area of expertise.
Global Ready Talent Program	The program supports overseas placement and work opportunities for Bahrainis to help them gain valuable work experience, develop their skills and gain exposure to international work environments.

Key Takeaways

HR is transforming into a strategic function

HR has transformed from a traditional administrative department to a strategic function, capable of instigating change and innovation. This shift, enabled by technological advances, is evident in Bahrain. Adoption of cutting-edge technologies has streamlined recruitment processes and enhanced employee engagement and performance management, allowing HR functions to make data-driven decisions and optimize organizational performance. .

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) is becoming a key consideration for employers

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion have become central themes within Bahrain's HR practices, driven by both global trends and local initiatives. Learning and development professionals are increasingly in demand to help organizations adopt DEI strategies. Organizations are focusing on creating inclusive workplaces that foster a sense of belonging and promote equal opportunities to drive innovation and improve organizational performance by leveraging diverse perspectives and talents.

Lifelong learning is needed to maintain a competitive workforce

Bahrain is investing in upskilling and reskilling initiatives to prepare its workforce for future challenges. The development of a future-ready HR workforce involves a focus on core and technical skills, with an emphasis on lifelong learning. Training programs and initiatives supported by entities like Tamkeen aim to bridge skill gaps and promote continuous professional development, ensuring that the workforce remains competitive and aligned with industry needs. In HR, lifelong learning contributes to employee adaptability, the creation of an internal marketplace, and organizational agility.

Organizations are investing in the employee experience and nurturing a holistic workplace

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the adoption of remote work, necessitating new HR strategies for managing virtual teams and ensuring employee wellbeing. Companies are focusing on creating inclusive and flexible work environments, while prioritizing mental health, work-life balance, and employee engagement to attract and retain the best talent.

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- IKEA - Ghassan Ahmad Al Sulaiman Furniture Trading Company
- Masar Group
- Nass Commercial
- Nass Corporation
- National Bank of Bahrain
- Racing Force Group

Glossary of Terms

Term	Definition
Core Skills	The combination of essential skills required to be fully prepared for life and work in a global economy
Digitalization	The use of digital technologies, digitized information and data to change business operations and introduce efficiencies and opportunities
Emerging Jobs	A job/occupation that currently has small numbers but is expected to grow in the future
Job	A paid position of employment held by an individual
Job Family	A group of jobs/positions that involve working in the same functional occupation and share related core knowledge and background requirements. The job family structure is based on function rather than organizational structure.
Job Role	A specific set of responsibilities and duties assigned to an employee within an organization
National Occupational Standards (NOS)	Document covering job description, key tasks, and a set of core and technical skills required for key job roles in the sector
Sector Skills Report	A concise report which outlines an overview of an industry sector by identifying trends, presenting macro-economic data, outlining current and future job roles and associated skills gaps and making recommendations for the future
Skills Framework	Provides information such as key sector information, occupations and job roles, and the required existing and emerging skills to fulfil roles within that sector
Skills Gap	The difference between the identified skills (core and technical) that an employer expects their employees to have and the actual skills that employees possess
Skills Mismatch	An overarching term which can be used to describe various instances of imbalance in skills e.g. skill shortage which is where the demand for a particular type of skills exceeds the supply of the workforce with these skills; skill surplus which is where the supply of the workforce with a particular type of skills exceeds demand in the job market; over-skilling occurs where the workforce has more skills than required to perform a job adequately; under-skilling occurs where the workforce has less skills than required to perform a job adequately
Stakeholder Engagement	The process by which an organization involves others who may be affected by the decisions it makes or can influence the impact and implementation of its decisions
Technical Skills	The specialized knowledge and expertise required to perform specific tasks and use specific tools and programs associated with a particular job role