

Academy of Human Resource Development

Standards for HRD Graduate Program Excellence

Developed by
Academic Standards Committee of the Academy of Human Resource Development

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Graduate academic programs in Human Resource Development and related fields play a critical role in educating and future HRD professionals and others and thus ensuring a sufficient number of experts to guide the increasingly complex HRD discipline in organizations and institutions around the world.

By demand from its members, the Academy of Human Resource Development has, for the past several years, engaged in a concentrated effort to identify characteristics of academic program excellence. Through involvement by the general membership, through the work of a commission appointed by the President of AHRD, and through Board discussion and reflection, the Academy has developed a set of standards and recommendations aimed at graduate programs in HRD and related fields. These standards were developed based on review of outstanding programs, benchmarking of other professional fields, review of existing frameworks for program accreditation, and the ideas of leading scholars and programs administrators in the field.

The standards focus on the following seven core areas:

- 1.0 Program Purpose**
- 2.0 Faculty**
- 3.0 Curriculum**
- 4.0 Students**
- 5.0 Research**
- 6.0 Resources**
- 7.0 Leadership and Support**

The purpose of these standards is to communicate a set of expectations for existing and newly developing graduate programs that is agreed upon by the membership of the profession. The standards are intended to encourage graduate academic programs towards higher levels of achievement and performance around a common set of characteristics while maintaining their unique and distinctive identity. The standards are offered in the spirit of collegial respect for the diverse traditions of our discipline and of its academic programs and within a self-evaluation and continuous improvement framework. The guiding belief behind the standards is that of unity in the essentials and diversity in the specifics.

Standards for HRD Graduate Program Excellence

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 **Vision.** A formal statement which describes the desired future state of the graduate program is used to frame and direct the program.
- 1.2 **Mission.** A formal statement describes actions that need to occur to achieve the graduate program vision.
- 1.3 **Strategy.** Formal plans exist for attainment of the graduate program vision and mission.
- 1.4 **Internal Standards.** Formal internal programmatic standards (indicators of success) exist related to the graduate program vision, mission, and strategy.
- 1.5 **Definition.** A formal shared definition of human resource development is used to describe and advocate for the profession and guide programmatic and curricular decisions.
- 1.6 **Codes.** Formal acknowledgement of ethics or integrity codes exists and guides programmatic and curricular decisions.
- 1.7 **Innovation.** Formal strategies exist to ensure graduate program renewal, innovation, and leadership to the profession.

2.0 Faculty

- 2.1 **Expertise.** Faculty, by education and experience, have high levels of expertise in theoretical and applied areas of HRD and are recognized as leaders in their respective areas.
- 2.2 **Diversity.** Faculty represent diversity of personal and professional characteristics, including demographic characteristic but also with respect to viewpoints, approaches to research and scholarship, and intellectual and ideological commitments and preferences.
- 2.3 **Number of HRD Faculty.** There are a sufficient number of faculty dedicated to achieve mission and strategy of program.
- 2.4 **Program Culture and Climate.** Faculty maintain a high level of collegiality and collaboration to ensure program effectiveness, growth, and innovation.
- 2.5 **Scholarly Productivity.** Faculty are actively engaged in HRD scholarship, as evidenced by publications, grants, and collaboration domestically and internationally.
- 2.6 **Teaching and Advising.** Faculty are recognized for teaching excellence and are effective in guiding students toward graduation and professional success.
- 2.7 **Faculty Development.** Faculty are encouraged, supported, and rewarded for continuing professional development; junior faculty are mentored and supported towards tenure and promotion; faculty are provided with effective feedback and opportunities to enhance their performance.

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2.8 **Engagement.** Faculty assume leadership roles in their institutions, their communities, and their professional associations; faculty are encouraged and rewarded for balancing the roles of research, teaching, and service.

2.9 **Adjunct Faculty.**

3.0 Curriculum

3.1 **Purpose of Program of Study.** The purpose of education at each of the levels it is offered is clear, distinctive from the other levels, and aligned with common practice in profession.

Master's curricula in human resource development provide a distinctly professional perspective. Master's in Human Resource Development degree programs prepare individuals who seek specialized roles in human resource development and related professions.

Doctoral education in human resource development prepares scholars to create and transmit knowledge and to advance human resource development and professional practice. The education of individuals in doctoral programs emphasizing human resource development should include:

- Acquisition of advanced knowledge in the individual's area of specialization
- Development of advanced research skills for the area of specialization
- Explicit attention to the role of the area of specialization in organizational contexts
- Experiences that prepare the individual for teaching responsibilities in higher education for those individuals who expect to enter teaching careers.

3.2 **Conceptual Framework.** A conceptually sound and theory/research-based framework underlies the design of the curriculum. Core constructs are clear, agreed upon by the faculty, and operationalized in curriculum.

3.3 **Research and Theoretical Basis.** The theoretical and research bases underlying each class in the curriculum and/or the students' overall experience are clear and explicit.

3.4 **Core Theory in HRD.** Curriculum should provide an understanding of perspectives that form the context for human resource development. Coverage should include topics such as:

- analysis and assessment
- design and development of interventions
- measurement and evaluation
- organization development and change
- improving human performance
- organizational learning and knowledge management
- career development and talent management
- managing the HRD function
- consulting
- coaching
- adult learning
- design and delivery of learning
- ethics in HRD and organizations
- organization behavior

3.5 **Future Trends.** Curriculum reflects emerging trends and future of profession.

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- 3.6 **Interdisciplinary.** The multidisciplinary nature of the field is reflected and incorporated into the curriculum.
- 3.7 **Integrative Experiences.** Curriculum includes integrative experiences that demonstrate students' ability to draw upon and apply material covered throughout the program of study and to demonstrate skills in continuous learning through information access, synthesis and use in critical thinking.
- 3.8 **Development of Research Skills.** Students are developed to have strong research skills that include (a) comprehend and utilize research and (b) conduct research (applied research and evaluation at undergraduate and masters level and other types of research at doctoral).
- 3.9 **Research Paradigms.** Classes develop students' knowledge of and potential utilization of multiple research paradigms.
- 3.10 **Development of Reflective and Scholarly Practice.** The curriculum develops the skills and competencies of a reflective and/or a scholarly practitioner. These include, but are not limited to, critical reflection on practice, capability to consult scholarly resources as a basis for improvement of student's HRD practice, and capacity to contribute to theory through partnership research, applied research, and publication.
- 3.11 **Curriculum Evaluation and Improvement.** Degree program(s) are systematically monitored to assess their effectiveness and revised to reflect new objectives and to incorporate improvements.

4.0 Students

- 4.1 **Recruitment.** Diversity in the student base is fostered.
- 4.2 **Selection.** An admissions process that utilizes multiple admission criteria is used to afford holistic consideration for each candidate.

This could include criteria/measures such as: standardized test scores, grade point averages, demonstration of technical (learning) knowledge, work experiences, applicant's career goals, and commitment to the HRD profession.
- 4.3 **Rigorous Academic Standards.**
 - 4.3.1 Rigorous academic standards and graduation requirements are clearly outlined and shared with students.
 - 4.3.2 Rigorous grading processes are clearly outlined and shared with students.
 - 4.3.3 Doctoral students have a deep, working knowledge of the key theories/research in the field.
 - 4.3.4 Students are encouraged to publish and present research.
- 4.4. **Student Progress.**
 - 4.4.1 Student progress is actively monitored and fostered through on-going progress reviews.

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4.4.2 Students who are not meeting the academic standards are counseled and remediated.

4.5. Student Development.

4.5.1 Students' development outside of the traditional classroom is encouraged and supported.

4.5.2 Career development opportunities outside of classroom are provided.

4.5.3 Support and academic opportunities for both potential scholars and practitioners are offered.

4.5.4 Placement of students in leadership roles (scholar and practitioner) is encouraged.

4.5.5 Academic preparation and development opportunities exist for doctoral students who aim to work in universities as faculty.

4.5.6 Students are encouraged to complete internships with global scholars.

4.5.7 Students are encouraged to be members of and be active in professional associations.

4.5.8 Mentoring opportunities for students exist.

4.5.9 Opportunities exist for students to participate in learning communities.

5.0 Research

5.1 **Faculty Research Agenda.** Faculty actively engage in research and have a research agenda.

5.2 **Program Responsibility.** Student and joint faculty-student research efforts are fostered.

5.3 **Research Paradigms.** Multiple research paradigm expertise is represented among the faculty, or a focus on one specific paradigm in the program is explicit and cultivated.

5.4 **Research Productivity.** Faculty are encouraged to present their research at national and international conferences, and to publish their research in scholarly journals.

5.5 **Quality of Research.** Research is rigorous and highly relevant for theory and/or practice.

6.0 Resources

6.1 **HRD Program Operating Budget.** An adequate budget exists to support program marketing costs, operating expenses, and other necessary program expenses.

6.2 **HRD Faculty Professional Development.** HRD faculty have support equivalent to that of faculty in other programs in the college for professional travel, computer and other ICT technology, and other resources required for their development and effectiveness.

6.3 **HRD Faculty Salaries.** HRD faculty salaries are comparable to those of other faculty within their college, rank, and pay band.

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- 6.4 **HRD Students.** Support equivalent to that found in other programs in the college is available to HRD students for assistantships and graduate student travel.
- 6.5 **HRD Program Student Faculty Ratios.** HRD program student faculty ratios are consistent with other high quality programs in the type of institution and college in which this program resides.
- 6.6 **University Library & Other Learning Resources.** The university in which the HRD program resides has adequate library and other resource materials to support faculty and student instructional and research needs. These materials are also available on-line.

7.0 Leadership and Support

- 7.1 **Unit Leadership.** The Dean of the college/school/division understands and supports the HRD program's vision, mission, and strategy.
- 7.2 **Participation.** The dean, the department chair and the HRD program director support participative decision-making with the faculty.
 - 7.2.1 **Program Participation.** The HRD program chair encourages and supports input and influence among staff and students in program policy and operations.
- 7.3 **Stakeholder Support.** The HRD program solicits feedback and support from outside stakeholders through forums such as advisory boards and alumni groups and provides support to all sectors of the community through consulting and volunteer efforts.
- 7.4 **Program Leadership.** The HRD program's director/coordinator is a "senior" (or seasoned) faculty member.
- 7.5 **Strategic Connections.** The HRD faculty strategically connects its efforts to the department and college to interdependence.
- 7.6 **International Support.** The HRD Program fosters relationships with international organizations, universities and other institutions of learning in other countries, and with both global profit and non-profit organizations.
- 7.7 **Program Review and Continuous Improvement.** The HRD program performs periodic reviews as determined by the university administration, as well as continuously assesses itself against these standards.