Aims
The aims of this course are

- Explore the differences between Comparative and International HRM
- Comparative HRM examines the role of national context as a source of differentiation for the management of individuals with the firm; the nature of recruitment, selection, motivations, rewards, careers, training and development.
- International HRM is usually a Multinational Company (MNC) perspective on the HR function and how management within the MNC manages, develop, staffs, rewards and motivates employees from a range of different national contexts. In this perspective the firm is a source of coherence and integration, melding a diverse workforce with ‘organisational identity’ and ‘commitment’. It does not discount the strength of national differences, rather it highlights the agency of management in the MNC in being able to reduce its differentiating effects by controlling employees within the boundaries of the firm.
- A variant of International HRM looks at the role of dominant or strong MNCs from economies that perceived to be dominant – such as the US, Japan, and Germany – and the role such MNCs play in ‘transferring’ the home country HRM and work organisation practices to the host society. In this context the subsidiaries of MNCs are ‘transplants’ of the home country practices and this debate is most evident in the case of Japanese MNCs.

Pre-requisites
BA2090 Human Resource Management

Essential Reading
International Human Resource Management, 3rd Ed. (Harzing & Pinnington)

Included as study materials once registered on the course.

Learning Outcomes
By the end of this module students should be able to:

- Understand the implications of changes in the global organisation of firms and the international workforce for HRM policy choices
- Demonstrate a detailed understanding of the key analytical concepts and models in international HRM
- Assess the principal comparisons and contrasts of the business and human resource systems in the UK and the USA, Germany and Japan.
- Evaluate the different approaches to and strategies for HRM in international business activities, and their impact on employees
- Evaluate the problems of transferring HRM practices from one country to another and the role of MNCs as agents of knowledge transfer.
**Syllabus**

**Topic 1** introduces the themes of International HRM and outlines the whole course. The topic will outline the main differences between International and Comparative HRM and provide an analytical framework for thinking about these differences.

**Topic 2** This topic examines the nature of strategy and structure in MNCs. It considers the key aspects of strategy and structure in international as opposed to domestic firms. The main part of the topic reviews some of the best-known typologies in this field, spelling out the varying strategies that firms pursue, the strengths and weaknesses of these and their implications for IHRM. We go on to investigate power relations between different groups of organisational actors within MNCs and the implications of the embeddedness of MNCs in their country of origin for strategy.

**Topic 3** The country-of-origin effect is one of the earliest theories regarding the role of culture in multinational corporations. Despite having largely been ignored in favour of research concentrating on the impacts of national culture and globalisation in recent years, the country-of-origin effect continues to have a visible impact on multinational corporations (MNCs), their culture and their human resource management systems. The effect itself and its repercussions are the topic of this unit.

**Topic 4** At the end of the previous topic, we considered the reasons why the 'country-of-origin effect', or the theory that MNC branches are most affected by the culture of their home countries, did not completely explain the formation of the culture of most MNCs. It is thus worth considering the opposite perspective, that the host countries of the branches of MNCs have more of an impact on them than that of the home country or of the organisation as a whole. In this topic we will be looking at this theory in detail.

**Topic 5** In the modern world we are witnessing the decay of fixed boundaries around culture and institutional identity and this is impacting on the character of work and human resource management at the organisational level. This topic outlines different approaches to the analysis of contemporary capitalism and considers what role they allocate to the business organisation.

**Topic 6** This topic examines the HRM practices of US-based MNCs. Twice as much foreign direct investment comes from the USA as from any other country. Thus American MNCs exert a greater influence over the global economy than those of any other nationality. The American business system is distinctive in a number of respects, particularly in its emphasis on free market competition. Not only is the American business system distinctive but it is also seen as ‘dominant’ within the international economy in the sense that it is seen as having produced living standards and corporate success stories that few other countries can emulate.

**Topic 7** The business and HRM systems of the United Kingdom are worth considering for a number of reasons. The fact that Britain was one of the first countries to industrialise means that it was also the originator of many concepts which are taken for granted today in labour relations, such as the union and collective bargaining. Britain’s position between the United States and Europe gives it a business culture which is something of a hybrid between the more commercially-focused American system and the more socialist systems of other European countries.

**Topic 8** In this unit we turn to explore a very different style of HRM, one that is often called the ‘social-democratic’ model, which can be found in European countries like Austria, Germany and Sweden. In this unit, we focus on Germany and Austria.

**Topic 9** The social challenges facing the European Union (EU) at the beginning of the 21st century are immense. They include concern over levels of unemployment, the need to promote secure, rewarding jobs in flexible labour markets, anxieties over the impact of continuing technological change on the workplace, an ageing population with consequent pressures on welfare systems, the enlargement of its membership into central and eastern Europe and the introduction of the European Monetary Union (EMU). This ‘widening’ and ‘deepening’ will undoubtedly bring further wide-ranging economic restructuring in their wake. It is scarcely surprising therefore that social policy has become an increasingly significant area of EU activity, and therefore constitutes the subject-matter of this topic.
**Topic 10** This topic considers the challenges and on-going developments in the management of people in Africa. We focus on what is unique in the African context and how the specific contextual circumstances on the continent impact on the theory and practice of HRM.

**Topic 11** In this topic we examine the contemporary developments in the management of people in the Asian region. Due to space and time constraints this topic focuses mainly on the more easterly region which has been the focus of attention in part due to their tremendous economic achievements in the last two or three decades. We deal with the topic on a thematic basis with relevant reference to specific countries as appropriate, and then consider in some detail three country case studies.

**Topic 12** This is the first part of two topics on the nature of Japanese HRM and more especially the impact of Japanese foreign direct investment (FDI) and subsidiary formation on the question of transferring home country practices overseas. This topic sets up the nature of the Japanese firm, the growth of FDI and the core debate about whether or not the Japanese firm would transfer HRM practices.

**Topic 13** In this topic we will explore in depth detailed British fieldwork into a cluster of Japanese subsidiaries and the problems they encountered during their establishment and maturity in regard to their human resource management operations.

**Topic 14** In this topic we will be focusing on the role the nationality of the parent firm takes in shaping the integration process. We will consider the features of host countries which influence the nature of restructuring in the post-merger period, highlighting the ‘political’ dimension to cross-border M&As, including the role of different groups within a firm who will seek to influence the character of the new firm.

**Topic 15** Expatriates are critical to business success in the global market place. Expatriate numbers are rising, reflecting organisations’ penetration of new markets. Expatriate assignments take a variety of forms in line with business need, local conditions and employees’ own circumstances. Because of the high costs associated with expatriate assignments, companies need to ensure that selection, preparation, training and in-post support are all carefully considered.

**Topic 16** This is a difficult area to condense into a topic of this size. Business ethics and Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) is a cross disciplinary subject, where issues of HRM are linked to other aspects of management – financial resourcing, operations and supply chain management, as well as corporate strategy. In this topic we try and balance a concern over ethical abuses in IHRM, with ideas for promoting ethical good practice. In this topic we move from defining both CSR and business ethics, through to identifying different approaches to ethical decision making, and then explore these with relation to specific ethical topics.

**Topic 17** The directive on European works councils (EWCS), was adopted by the EU in September 1994 following lengthy controversy. Workers across the EU now have the right to information and consultation on company decisions at EU-level through their EWC representatives. It applies to all transnational companies of a certain size, wherever their headquarters might be located.

**Topic 18** Topic 13 in the second year HRM course covered the details of the methods employed for recruitment and selection. This topic will concentrate more on the international aspects of recruitment and selection, especially comparative differences in Recruitment & Selection (R & S) and the role of staffing within the MNC, in particular the role of expatriates. We will examine the use of social networks for staffing, its benefits and how the use of social networks varies across countries. At the end of the topic you will be able to understand the importance of national differences in staffing the organisation (comparative HRM) and the key features of staffing with the MNC (HRM in the International firm).

**Topic 19** Performance appraisal and compensation, two standard parts of any company’s HR system, take on additional complications when applied at the international level. In this topic, we shall consider some of the issues involved in developing performance appraisal and compensation systems for international managers.